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PROVIDENCE—DIVINE AND HUMAN

VOLUME I

PROVIDENCE—DIVINE AND HUMAN

A STUDY OF THE WORLD-ORDER IN THE LIGHT OF MODERN THOUGHT

BY

E. GRIFFITH-JONES, B.A., D.D.

AUTHOR OF
"THE ASCENT THROUGH CHRIST," "FAITH AND IMMORTALITY"
"THE CHALLENGE OF CHRISTIANITY TO A WORLD AT WAR"
"FAITH AND VERIFICATION," "THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT," ETC.

VOLUME I

SOME PROBLEMS OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE

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TO THE HONOURED MEMORY OF MY

FIRST PUBLISHER

JAMES BOWDEN

A MAN WHOSE HEART WAS AS GENEROUS

AS HIS JUDGMENT WAS JUST

THIS BOOK IS GRATEFULLY

DEDICATED

" This Sphinx . . .
. . . Exacts a word at least
From each man standing on the side of God,
However paying a Sphinx-price for it.
We pay it also if we hold our peace
In pangs and pity. Let me speak and die."

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

" As all Nature's myriad changes,
Still one changeless power proclaim,
So, through Thought's wide kingdom ranges,
One vast meaning still the same ;
This is Truth—eternal Reason—
That in Beauty takes its dress,
And, serene through time and season,
Stands complete in righteousness."

GOETHE, tr: by THOMAS CARLYLE.

" That to the height of this great argument,
I may assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men."

MILTON, *Paradise Lost.*

PREFACE

This work, of which only the first part is here included, is intended as a companion volume to the *Ascent Through Christ*, which was published twenty-five years ago. That book (now in its tenth edition) was, as stated in the preface, "a study of certain spiritual facts which cluster round the Mystery of Divine Redemption viewed in the light of that great principle of Development which has taken possession of the mind of to-day, and which seems destined in its broader aspects permanently to affect human thought in all its departments." The warm reception given to this attempt to deal in an apologetic way with some of the central truths of Christianity under evolutionary categories encouraged the writer to give close attention to the wider aspects of the Faith in the same context, and to prepare a similar work on the Doctrine of Divine Providence in the light of modern conceptions of reality. The intervening years have been given at intervals to the study of this subject, but the engrossing duties of his office, together with the profound disturbance of all processes of human thinking caused by the world-war, have made it impossible till recently to complete the task.

The war emphasised a conviction previously held by the writer that no adequate handling of this subject could be achieved without departing radically from the method of previous writers on the subject

of the Providential Order. Hitherto, its problems have been dealt with almost entirely from the divine point of view, in neglect of the fact that many of these problems are the result of purely human agency, which has disturbed the ideal course of events, and introduced abnormality into the divine plan from the beginning of human history. He has found it convenient, therefore, to divide his treatment into two parts, the first of which deals with the world as God made it and with its evolution as He intended it to be. Even so, modern thought has greatly stressed the difficulties of faith in the Christian world-view. The Evolutionary Theory has disturbed the traditional belief in the supreme place of man in creation, has obscured the teleological principle as a key to the dynamic aspect of cosmic events, and has made the facts of evil, in its fourfold aspects of limitation, error, suffering, and moral wrong, more difficult to understand. It is with these problems that this volume is concerned. An attempt has been made to isolate the divine aspects of the facts from the human, and to re-establish the faith that the physical universe is intended, so far as man has a place in it, to be a stage for his training and education for the function of world-rulership in a subordinate partnership with the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Through the entrance of sin into the world, this ideal relationship has been disturbed, and the consummation of the divine purpose delayed. So far as man is concerned, this would have been the end of the matter, for it is one of the axioms of the Evolutionary Theory that, once a creature has departed from the upward line of advance, it can never return to its former path, but is doomed to degeneracy and ultimate extinction. But from the divine side, according to

the Christian Faith, this failure on the part of man has been the opportunity of God, who has adapted His providential methods to the situation, by introducing a redemptive movement into human history, the rudiments of which, indeed, may be faintly traced in the natural order, and which in Jesus Christ has found its full and final expression. So far the argument of this volume.

In the completing volume the human side of the general problem of Providence will be treated, as is forecasted in the present volume (pp. 308–10) ; and it will conclude with a tentative picture of the world if and when mankind returns to its normal path of fellowship with God in the control of the physical and human world, in the interests of the spiritual life for which man was intended in the Providential Order.

It may be added that, in this work, the validity of the essential Christian doctrines is taken for granted. It is a book, that is, not for the unbeliever or the sceptic, but for the perplexed Christian believer who is anxious to harmonise his faith with the world-view of modern science and philosophy, and to express it, *so far as that can be done without detriment to spiritual values*, in the thought-forms of our day and generation. This is not to suggest that these passing thought-forms have any final authority or validity, for in the nature of the case they are always changing and developing, with the march of knowledge ; but, since the beginnings of Christianity, it has been one of the tasks of Christian apologists to correlate its realities and experiences with the prevailing system of thought in each successive era. This is a task peculiarly necessary to-day, when the whole orientation of thought has passed through so drastic and revolutionary a change. There are multitudes of believing men and women who

are sore put to it to hold to their faith in the face of the movements of secular thought, many of which entirely ignore all spiritual realities, or treat them as of no account, in their synthesis of reality ; and if the writer can persuade such people that it is quite possible to be a consistent evolutionist and at the same time a convinced Christian, holding the essentials of the Faith in joyful sincerity, he will hold it as a great reward.

E. GRIFFITH-JONES.

UNITED COLLEGE, BRADFORD.
September 1925.

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INTRODUCTION

THE ECLIPSE OF FAITH IN PROVIDENCE

" How is it that our modern thought
Has travelled far from sacred ways,
And every certain truth is bought
By parting with some Faith and Praise ? "

OLRIG GRANGE.

I

THE need for a restatement of the Christian doctrine of Providence is not likely to be denied by any careful observer of recent currents of thought. It was one of the axiomatic religious beliefs of our pious forefathers that the universe owed its existence and its activity to the will and oversight of an all-wise, all-powerful, all-loving Creator, whose goodness was " over all His works." They held without question that a beneficent purpose ran through all the confused course of events. This purpose was found equally illustrated in the trivial occurrences of everyday life, and in the vast sweep of cosmic forces. And this purpose was always *moral* in character. There were spiritual meanings in the quality of the annual harvest ; in the incidence of a lightning-flash ; in the calamities that laid heavy burdens on men's shoulders ; and in the deliverances that rescued them from impending doom. Races had their God-given mission to fulfil, and if they failed to retain their

place in the international or cosmic struggle, it was because they had been unfaithful to this mission, or because their corporate providential function had been completed. Amid the rise and fall of dynasties, one thing at least was certain—the divine will was being inevitably fulfilled. Progress was sure, if long delayed; the ultimate triumph of the Right not to be doubted, however complete the temporary triumph of Evil. A mighty Hand led the generations on "by a way that they knew not"; and if it often took mankind through storm and sorrow, it was always "a way of good." Doubtless there were many perplexing tragedies in life, many dark and insoluble problems in the history of men and of peoples; but faith was assured that they were problems of vision only, and that if men's eyes could but pierce the thick clouds of ignorance that fogged their earthly outlook, they would "worship and bow the head" at the ineffable glory of the cosmic plan, and the perfect wisdom and love of the great Being whose "word" could not "return to Him void." And however naïve this theory of the Providential Government may appear in the eyes of the emancipated thinker of to-day, it cannot be denied that it gave to life a high and noble dignity, and produced a type of character that was serene in its outlook on the world and full of an austere and tranquil virtue.

It is not too much to say that the above theory of the Providential Order, inherited from the age of the Puritans, has recently suffered more than a "sea-change"; it has undergone a disastrous eclipse. A sense of deep disquiet has fallen on the world of thought. Optimistic views of the universe and of human destiny are increasingly difficult to hold in the face of the profound and far-reaching scepticism that

troubles the human mind. Few nowadays are able to hold without an inward misgiving the old comforting, stimulating doctrine that "all things work together for good to them that love God." Belief in the law of progress has given way to a fear lest all social advance and every ethical improvement involves movement in a "vicious circle"; that humanity rises only to fall again, and that there is no "far-off divine event, to which the whole creation moves." A reasoned acceptance of this negative conclusion in all its bearings and deductions is perhaps rare; but the miasmatic effects of slackening faith in a divine Providence are seen in a thousand ways, especially in the loss of idealism in the conduct of public affairs, in the growing passion for material comforts and "quick results" on the part of the average man, in the tendency of many belonging to the "comfortable" classes to acquiesce in social evils that should long since have been swept away, and in a serious loss of enthusiasm even among those who profess to have retained their faith in at least some traces of divine guidance and love in the government of the world. Religious faith and a passion for human progress have always been co-ordinates in human affairs; when the first dies down, the motive towards betterment is paralysed at its nerve centre. For with faith in God goes faith in the inherent triumph of goodness, and therefore all confidence that man's efforts after an ideal of progress have any guarantee of success. Without a heavenly breeze to swell its folds, the sail of all moral endeavour, individual or social, swings idly against the mast.

If this is so, it is clear that an investigation into the problems of the Providential Order, in their present-

day aspect, is one of the pressing needs of the time. We cannot afford to be without a faith, from a practical as well as a theoretic point of view. It is not possible to shelve the question, even provisionally, without disastrous results. Life has to be lived; its urgent problems must be faced and handled in some fashion or other; to profess to be unable at least partially to settle them is to find oneself ranged more or less inevitably on the side of unbelief; and if we fail to walk in the "light of life," we must perforce plunge forward into the dark. There is no pause for the individual or for the race in the march of events. And since vision (or the lack of it) so largely determines conduct, and our practical aims are vitally affected by our religious attitude, it is of the utmost importance for all those who wish to make the best of this brief span of existence to consider whether by a readjustment of their ideas they may renew that happy faith in a beneficent Providential Order in the light of which all the good and great of the race have lived and worked, for without some substitute for, or renewal of, this faith, we shall fail to do anything high or enduring.

II

A brief survey of the chief causes which have brought about this temporary eclipse of faith in the overruling and guiding hand of Providence in cosmic affairs is necessary for a right handling of the subject. It will be enough to point out three or four salient tendencies which have profoundly affected the thought of the last century in our own land, and which largely account for the "climatic change" that has taken place in men's views of the universe.

1. All great movements in the world of thought find their germinal ideas in the realm of philosophic speculation. The word "Pessimism" stands for one of these germinal ideas. It represents the rebound from the optimistic philosophy which prevailed in Europe throughout the eighteenth century, which may be traced back to Leibnitz as its first great exponent—a thinker whose writings had a widespread influence in this country as well as on the Continent Voltaire broke the happy spell in the world of thought, and the proximate failure of the French Revolution completed the disillusionment in the world of affairs. Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea* laid the philosophical foundations of the reactionary theory—a theory indeed which had always existed as a sporadic tendency from early times, but which had never before been formulated into a reasoned concept, nor woven into the close-knit tissue of a philosophic system—the tendency, that is, to depreciate the value of life by denying its ideal ends, by striking a negative balance between its pleasures and pains, and by emptying the outlook on the universe of all objective spiritual content. This great work appeared in 1819, at the time when "sentimental pessimism" was at its height in Europe, under the inspiration of Byron in England, Heine and Lenau in Germany, and Chateaubriand in France, all of whom gave melodious expression to the *weltschmerz* or *tædium vitæ* then fashionable in the world of polite letters. Many years passed, however, before Schopenhauer's views gained any currency in this country. But with the waning of the influence of the great Evangelical Revival which had swept like a fresh wind through all spheres of English life, and with the revolutionary effects of the Darwinian theory on the scientific outlook, a subtle

change passed over all the departments of thought, and the influence of pessimism began to penetrate far beyond the little band of *literati* who had studied the views of Schopenhauer and succeeding writers of the same school. Pessimism as a reasoned system has never indeed taken root in Britain; the British temperament is antipathetic to all views of life that tend to check enterprise, or to paralyse the free adventure of the spirit. None the less has this dismal creed had a certain effect in lowering the tone of religious thought and life even in this country.

2. In entire harmony and co-operation with this philosophical reaction came the scientific revolution for ever associated with the name of Charles Darwin. The formulation of the "law of persistence" in the biological world which goes by the name of Evolution, with its corollary the "survival of the fittest," was one of the most revolutionary generalisations ever attempted by the human mind. When Darwin modestly and tentatively worked his way to it through the study of a vast mass of detailed facts, he probably did not realise the far-reaching consequences of his task. Leading scientists rose to it as to the Eureka of the problem of biology; while at first theologians, with singular unanimity, greeted it with measureless alarm. Now that the smoke of battle is clearing away from this historic field of conflict, we can see something like a justification for both these points of view. Theologians were right in thinking that if the law of "natural selection" were proved to hold undisputed and absolute sway over the process of organic life, there would be an end to all evidence of intelligent guidance and purpose in Nature. On the other hand, it was natural that a generation of agnostic

scientists should welcome the new biology as dispensing once and for all with the need of a theory of transcendental causes in order to account for any of the phenomena of life. In both cases, the net result, if once this theory were substantiated beyond doubt, would be to leave no room for the idea of an active and beneficent God in Nature. We now see that evolution is not a theory of causes at all, but only a theory of "causal methods"; and the first theological arguments against it were therefore wide of the mark. Scientists also have become more modest as they have come to understand the limitations of the theory of evolution, and to see that, while the phrase rightly describes the secondary agencies of biological progress, it throws no light on the mystery of the origin of life, nor on the operative forces of its development, nor yet on its ultimate destiny. But though the ground of antagonism is changed between this theory and the accepted doctrines of "Natural Religion"—to use a convenient but discredited phrase—the feud is by no means over. If it does not invalidate the belief in a personal God, it has at least brought to light facts which are very disturbing to a belief in the wisdom, the power, and the goodness of the Creator; and it is largely in view of these facts that the religious beliefs of so many have suffered shipwreck, and the faith of most thoughtful men is "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

It would be idle to deny also that for a long time there was felt to be a depressing aspect about the theory that man was genetically related to the lower organic order, and that the "human form divine" bore in its very tissues irresistible evidence of its lowly origin and pedigree. Man lost caste in his own eyes; the spiritual link between him and his Maker became

uncertain ; and there were reputable writers who did not scruple to affirm that, with the disappearance of the organic uniqueness of man, his spiritual uniqueness had also disappeared, and that a more adequate psychology would prove his highest powers and affinities to be but the sublimated essence—or rather the more perfect development—of the psychic equipment of his animal progenitors. If this had been finally established, it would indeed have ended in dethroning mankind from the proud position which the race had always assumed towards the physical and organic order ; the *raison d'être* of religion would have disappeared ; we should no longer believe that man held any special place either in the order of Providence or in the spiritual hierarchies of being ; and the Christian Gospel, with its splendid emphasis on the boundless significance of the human soul, would have sunk into the rank of those beautiful and unsubstantial dreams so many of which have vanished in the general break-up of human beliefs. This loss of faith in the qualitative difference between man and brute was, it is true, only a passing phase in the development of the theory of evolution ; but it had a profound and widespread effect on speculative and religious thought for the time being, by changing its centre of gravity and making physical and psychical considerations take the place of their spiritual equivalents. This accounts largely for the lowered tone of literature during the last half-century ; for the deposing of the theologian and the philosopher from the high places of thought, in favour of the psychologist, biologist and physical scientist ; and for the exaggerated deference shown to the social reformer as compared with the evangelist and the preacher. The balance has now largely been restored, partly through the

thorough breakdown of the new psychology in its attempts to become a complete theory of human nature, through the rise of a new school of Idealism among philosophers, and, it may be added, through the intuitive revolt of the soul against the attempt to class it among the mere phenomena of existence. The extraordinary welcome given to such books as Fiske's *Man's Destiny as seen in the Light of his Origin*, the publication of which marks the turn in the ebb of religious thought, and of Drummond's *Ascent of Man*, gave evidence to a widespread relief at the change of direction in the trend of thought; and since that time, the cloud has been slowly but surely lifting from the horizons of the world. None the less was the impression real and severe while it lasted, and its effects have been wide, and deep, and painful.

3. The third factor in the process which has proved so perilous to faith in a Providential Order is frankly anti-theological in character. We refer to the agnostic theories of the Divine Nature associated with the names of Herbert Spencer and T. H. Huxley, which have had a widespread influence on modern thought. The object of the first-named writer, like that of Renan in his *Vie de Jésu*, was not negative, but positive. It was an attempt, according to Spencer himself, to ascertain and delimit the common ground between religion and science, with a view to assuaging the age-long antagonism between them. Science no less than religion, he pointed out, affirms the existence of a great First Cause. There is nothing more certain than this—that God exists, and that He is the ground of all other existence. From whatever point of view we approach this question, we are inevitably brought along converging lines of evidence to this belief. So

far philosophy and religion are at one. The next article, however, in the Spencerian creed practically neutralises the religious value of this admission. For our philosopher goes on to say that while nothing is more certain than that God exists, it is at least equally certain that we can affirm nothing about Him except His bare existence. He is the Absolute Being ; but, for that very reason, He is absolutely and for ever Unknowable. The human mind, by its very constitution, is utterly unable to form any consistent conception of His nature. Directly we begin to define our thoughts concerning Him, we plunge into a network of self-contradictions out of which there is no logical escape except into an attitude of blank agnosticism. The strategic skill with which Spencer made use of the philosophy of Hamilton and Mansel (both firm believers in the Christian revelation) in support of his thesis gave his contentions an air of false cogency, and though most of his positions have long since been carried by assault, and others have been outflanked, the influence of his negative philosophy is not yet by any means spent.

There is a secondary type of agnosticism, closely allied with the philosophic theory of Spencer, which is the fruit of the " scientific " spirit which has prevailed since the second quarter of the last century, of which on its higher side the late Professor Huxley was the chief exponent, and which may be described as Naturalism, a kind of transfigured materialism. Tired of the abstractions of Idealism, and passionately absorbed in the study of the physical world, the representatives of this school turned the main current of thought away from metaphysical speculation and concentrated all interest for the time on physical science and its practical applications. On its positive

side this scientific movement—partly because of its masterly methods of research into the past history of the planet, into the conditions of the evolutionary process, and into the possibilities of human control over natural forces, and partly because of its profound humanitarian passion—brought untold benefits in its train. On its negative side, however, it failed because it was based on metaphysical assumptions which had never been reasoned out by its exponents, and which forced it into a crude phenomenalism in philosophy, logically ending in Pyrrhonism, or universal doubt. The human mind according to this system was a pure " epiphenomenon " or by-product of the evolutionary process, which could have no possible influence on that process, and was destined ultimately to disappear. On such an assumption, ethics lost its deeper sanctions, and religion became a temporary phase of thought and aspiration, having no objective validity. There could be no theory of Providence other than what is involved in the action of human foresight and energy. Man himself became a mere link in the chain of evolutionary development, and as he was ultimately (under the conditions of his changing environment) bound to disappear from the scene, there could be no climax to the evolutionary process in which he would share, and which made the sacrifices and struggles of his higher life worth enduring.

Here, then, we have three converging tendencies, ending in the temporary eclipse of faith in that theory of Providence on which all constructive thought among believers was based till within living memory, and which formed the vague background of even that large section of thinkers who never carry their conception of life to a clear logical statement. Doubtless

many other influences have been tending in the same direction, but this statement will suffice for our present purpose. Taken together, they have created a new situation in religious thought, and have made the modern problem of Providence altogether different from the old. Formerly the argument began on the basis of certain religio-philosophical assumptions. It took for granted that God is, and that He is a "rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." The modern theory of Providence must begin farther back. Out of the debris of past faiths it has to build an ampler sanctuary, and rear a loftier shrine. Perhaps this is not so great a disadvantage as at first sight it may seem to be. The time comes when it is wiser to pull down and rebuild a damaged building than to shore it up. It leaves the architect free to choose his site on firmer ground, and to select the lines of his structure in closer agreement with the ideals and necessities of his times. And if the theologian of to-day is thus called upon to a more radical task than his predecessors, he has a great advantage over them in that he is freed from many of their traditional limitations of thought and shackles of method; and he is able, by free and courageous handling of his materials, to direct his efforts at restatement into directions where the most fruitful results may be confidently expected.

III

The change of standpoint referred to above is seen in all departments of thought, as a few typical illustrations will make clear.

1. Theologians have not escaped the contagion of the prevalent temper of their age; and how entirely they have escaped from the narrow but intense parochialism

of Puritan ideas will be seen in the remarkable change in their treatment of the physical calamities which sometimes break in on the orderly course of the world. Two instances of such calamities are to be found in the earthquake which submerged Lisbon in 1756, causing the death of many thousands of people; and the volcanic eruption of Mt. Pelee in Martinique in 1902, by which in a similar manner a host of innocent people met with an untimely end. Both tragedies made a deep impression on the public mind; and both aroused serious religious questionings. Let us see what the questions were and how they were met by the typical thinkers of the two eras. In the first case we shall take the method of treatment adopted by a Puritan preacher in America in the eighteenth century, who was undoubtedly a representative of the orthodox believers of his day; in the second place, the attitude of some representative theologians of our own day, as revealed in a symposium in the early numbers of the *Hibbert Journal.*

In some volumes of *Sermons on Important Subjects*,[1] by the Rev. Samuel Davies, A.M., President of the College of New Jersey, U.S.A., who flourished about the middle of the eighteenth century, there is a remarkable discourse on "The Religious Improvement of the Late Earthquake," which was preached in Hanover County, Virginia, June 19, 1756. In this and other discourses in the same work it is assumed that physical calamities are always sent by a wise Providence as means of rousing a wicked and spiritually slumbering world to a realisation of the power and righteousness of God.[2]

[1] Reprinted, with an Essay on the Life and Times of the Author, by Albert Barnes (Ogle & Murray, Edinburgh, 1857).

[2] "This world is a state of discipline for another, and therefore

The divisions of the sermon give sufficient indication of the course of thought, which is developed with great learning and presented with unusual literary skill and oratorical force. "*First*," he writes, "let the majestic and terrible phenomena of the earthquakes put us in mind of the majesty and power of God, and the dreadfulness of His displeasure. . . . *Secondly*, this desolating judgment must justly lead us to reflect on the sinfulness of our world. . . . for it is sin that is the source of all the calamities that oppress our world from

chastisements of various kinds and degrees are to be enumerated among the ordinary works of Providence, pain, sickness, losses, bereavements, disappointments; these are the usual scourges of the divine hand, which our heavenly Father uses every day, to chastise some or other of His undutiful children. But when these are found too weak and ineffectual for their reformation; or when, from their being so frequent and common, men begin to think them things of course, and not to acknowledge the divine hand in them; then the Universal Ruler departs from His usual methods of chastisement, and uses such signal and extraordinary executioners of His vengeance, as cannot but rouse a slumbering world and render it sensible of His agency. At such times He throws the world into a ferment; and either controls its established laws, or carries such into execution, as were formed only for extraordinary occasions. These extraordinary ministers of His vengeance are generally these four:—*Famine*, *Sword*, *Pestilence* and *Earthquake*" (vol. ii, p. 378).

Cf. the following passage from Tertullian, who in castigating the vices of his day, makes use of the then recent destruction of Herculaneum by the eruption of Mount Vesuvius: "Think much on hell-fire, which this repentance alone can quench. Set before you the greatness of the punishment of hell, so that you shall not delay to lay hold of the salvation which Heaven stretches out to you. What a prison-house of eternal fire that must be if by one of its flues (!) such flames burst forth that cities are totally destroyed or lie in constant peril of destruction! The highest mountains, pregnant with fire, are rent asunder, and who can fail to see in these heaving and devouring mountains the symbols of everlasting hell? Who can fail to regard such sparks as messengers of an endlessly great multitude, and as threatened foretokens of the 'wrath to come'!" (Quoted in Coppen's *Homiletics*, p. 57.)

age to age; *it is sin that has so often convulsed it with earthquakes. . . . Thirdly,* this melancholy event may carry our minds gratefully to reflect on the peculiar kindness of God [sic !] to our country, in that it is not involved in the same destruction," under which heading, the preacher goes on to say, " Why have we, a guilty and wicked people, been spared the same fate ? It has been entirely owing to the grace and patience of that God who is so little regarded among us. . . . *Fourthly,* these devastations are both a confirmation to human reason of the universal destruction of the world at the Final Judgment, and a lively representation of the same."[1] We quote this at length because the writer unquestionably gives adequate utterance to the ideas of that time throughout the religious world in this country as well as in America—ideas which persisted down to the middle of last century. It will be seen that a single assumption underlies the whole argument—that all such exceptional calamities as befall the race through the agency of natural forces are due to a special divine judgment, directed towards the discipline of mankind in the laws and practice of the spiritual life. The one question asked by devout people in those simpler times was this: " What sin has the human race, or a portion of it, committed, to have deserved so condign and awful a punishment ? "

Even in those times, however, we find indications here and there that this awe-inspiring theory of the moral significance of physical calamities no longer satisfied some of the virile and independent intellects of their age. Voltaire's *Candide* is in effect an open rejection of such a theory of Providence as found such

[1] Ibid., pp. 377–90 (passim). Italics ours.

unquestioning acceptance at the hands of our Puritan divine. He justifies his derision of the current theology by the famous line, "Lisbon is engulphed, while Paris dances! (Lisbonne est abimée, et l'on danse à Paris)." Indeed under the revulsion caused by so terrible a catastrophe, it is said that thousands gave up their religion altogether, and refused to believe in a Deity who, whether in punishment of some particular sin, or as a sign of His general wrath against humanity, could perpetrate such unspeakable cruelties against the creatures of His "love." The choice in those days, however, seemed to lie between a hard dogmatism such as we have been describing, and a blatant unbelief such as found voice in the mockeries of the French *savant*.

If, now, we turn to the modern attitude towards the same problem, we are at once struck with a radical change of temper. In the first number of the *Hibbert Journal* there is a discussion of the question of "Catastrophe and the Moral Order" in view of the volcanic eruption in Martinique and St. Vincent in May 1902. It is not needful for our purpose at this stage to detail the arguments advanced by the various writers, who occupy widely sundered standpoints in theology and philosophy, ranging from avowed agnosticism to the latest and most enlightened form of evangelicalism. But the significant matter is this—that the idea that these cataclysmic occurrences have any relation to the actual spiritual condition of humanity is treated by all alike as a thoroughly outworn superstition. *It is God, not man, who is brought to book in this discussion, and put upon His trial.* Not the problem of human sinfulness, but the problem of the divine justice is the cause of perplexity. Not "what have men done to deserve such a judgment?" but "can

there be a God at all at the helm of the world that such things should be permitted to happen?" If there be such a God, can we any longer apply to Him such epithets as the word *good*—in any sense that can be called moral? It is clear that the contrast between the Puritan and the modern standpoint is fundamental. We are face to face with a fresh and far more difficult Providential problem. Instead of man having to answer to God for his sinfulness, it is God who has to answer the agonised cry of His suffering creatures, "Why hast Thou done thus with us?" Culprit and Judge have changed places.

2. When we turn from the religious world to the secular, from theological speculations to the tone of current thought, theoretical and practical, the change is no less remarkable. The difference here is not between one religious standpoint and another, but between a religious standpoint on one side and a purely secularistic attitude of mind on the other. The theocratic view of life, which at times used to trouble sceptical writers in the older days and filled the man in the street with vague misgivings in view of the mysterious backgrounds of life, and especially in the face of catastrophe and death, has lost its hold on the modern mind. The cosmic order, whether we regard its regular movements or its occasional disturbances, is viewed as having no relation to human conduct, and as pursuing its relentless way without any regard for man's interests or fate. The moral order and the physical are held to be quite independent of each other; there is no area in common, therefore no possibility of conflict between them. Pestilence is the result not of moral obliquity, but of violated physical law; the scourge of war is to be judged not

from its moral aspects, but as a phase in the physical and social evolution of the race; famine is not the result of widespread sin, serving as a special visitation of divine wrath, but an incident in the changes of climate, or at best a proof of imperfect economic foresight in the storage of grain, or in the distribution of food-stuffs; earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are not divine judgments, but the automatic effect of pent-up forces in the earth's centre, which occasionally cross the path of other forces and explode through their interaction; and such events have no ascertainable relation to the religious condition of the poor victims who happen to be hurried to a premature fate through their fiery activity. On the other hand, the modern mind takes the poet's view of these physical catastrophes:

> "Earthquakes do not scorn
> The just man to entomb,
> Nor lightnings turn aside
> To find his virtues room."[1]

This change of attitude towards the facts of life is emphasised by two characteristics of the age, which help to emphasise the revolt from the theocratic standpoint.

The first is a certain *impatience* and *shortsightedness* of spiritual temper, which refuses to look beyond the immediate fact, or to correct passing impressions by calm reference to general principles. The hurry that marks all the movements and relationships of life has infected the soul; most men have no time to think, except during the brief intervals in the rush and turmoil of their earthly occupations, and they grow incapable of large views and wide outlooks such as are quite essential to a wise consideration of the perplexities

[1] Matthew Arnold, *Empedocles on Ætna.*

of human experience. Now, in the very conditions of the case, the moral government of the universe must involve not only lengthened processes, but many hidden factors. The sweep of progress in a plan so immeasurably vast and complicated must needs be a very wide one; a large arc must be taken before its curvature can be measured; and it is always easy in such cases to collect a mass of facts that seem to tell against the idea of the divine goodness which to a more sober and patient investigation would assume a very different perspective. But sobriety and patience are just the qualities of mind most difficult to command in the present temper of the world. The average man to-day must see his way instantly from premise to conclusion; and where, as in all moral problems, we have to chose between a high explanation which demands an element of trust in order to justify it, and a low one which makes no demands on faith, the easier attitude is too often chosen even if it involves the rejection of sacred and time-honoured beliefs. The problems of Providence, in their very nature, are specially liable to abuse through this hurry and impatience in their handling; and in the issue faith inevitably suffers.

There is, further, a *sentimental bias* very often shown in the discussion of these problems. This age is marked by a peculiar sensitiveness to the spectacle, and still more to the experience, of suffering. The problem of pain has exercised the human soul from the dawn of the age of reflection, but never has its edge been so sharply felt, or its perplexity so painfully realised as to-day. This is not because there is more suffering in the world than of old—there is demonstrably far less; but the *sense* of it is more poignant; it troubles men more deeply to face the fact that it

exists in every department of life, and at every stage of experience; and they are not so willing to recognise its higher uses in the evolution of life, from the perfecting of species which is its function in the lower ranges of life, to its stimulating influence on character in the highest. This New Humanism, as it may be called, is at present not so much a moral force as a shallow sentiment—a futile protest against the inequalities, the sorrows, the struggles that beset the path of the soul from the cradle to the grave, which previous generations accepted in a more robust temper, and recognised as belonging to instrumentalities of moral training and spiritual growth.

IV

There are those who in spite of these facts claim that the loss of belief in Providence has only emancipated the human mind from the last of those age-long superstitions which have been successively shed by humanity in its onward path, as the light of scientific thought has broadened upon it. The shadow of Puritanism, they tell us, has too long darkened the world, and killed its natural joy in living, and even hindered its progress. The developments of naturalistic thought, however, do not bear out this contention. On the contrary there is unquestionably a great loss of buoyancy and brightness in the tone of these "emancipated" thinkers. Our latter-day poets, for instance, are not distinguished by any marked renewal of light-heartedness, and few of our philosophers venture to call themselves by the name of optimists. With the "mountain gloom" of the old theology there has gone

out of life much of its "mountain glory." [1] If we banish the divine from the shadow and horror of life, does it not also depart from its quiet beauties, and its dreamy solitudes? Was there not a richness and a charm in every passing sight even to the old pagan "suckled in a creed outworn," who peopled the woods with dryads, the waterfall and the breaking wave with nymphs, and saw in the impending mass of the thundercloud the presence of the awful Jove? And though the Puritan lived too habitually under the shadow of his Sinai, so that the lyric note in Nature was lost in a tense listening to her solemn undertones, he was at least awed by a sense of the perpetual presence of the Most High. Is there not in recent literature a wistful note of regret at the loss of something precious in our outlook on the world? Are we satisfied with the vision of Nature conjured up by naturalistic science as a whirlwind of warring forces guided by no intelligent hand, and filled with no secret, half concealed, half-revealed, of kindly love and helpfulness,

[1] Here are two passages from the pens of representative exponents of the "modern" point of view:

"The nymphs are gone, the fairies flown;
The ancient gods for ever fled;
The stars are silent overhead;
The music of the spheres is still;
The night is dark, the wind is chill;
The later gods have followed Pan,
And Man is left alone with Man."

ZANGWILL.

"We must play the game with a careless smile
Tho' there's nothing in the hand;
We must toil as if it were worth our while
Spinning our ropes of sand;
And laugh and cry, and live and die
At the waft of an Unseen Hand."

DAVIDSON.

or even as a deeply interesting drama of evolving life, moving purposefully from the abysm of the past towards some shining goal in the future?

Even in the last generation we heard premonitory strains of the sadness that always falls on the minds of candid thinkers when the divine presence is missed from the temple of Nature. Renan was a man of bright and sunny temperament, yet, speaking of the ruin of his supernatural beliefs, he said, "Candidly, I fail to see how, without the ancient dreams, the foundation of a happy and noble life can be relaid,"[1] and he confessed, when he left the walls of St. Sulpice, where he was being trained for the priesthood, that he "felt that he had lost caste, and fallen on a nest of pygmies."[2] There is a profoundly pessimistic note in Professor Seeley's book on *Natural Religion*, especially where he sums up the effect of a naturalistic philosophy on a profoundly religious mind: "The more our thoughts widen and deepen as the universe grows upon us, and we become used to boundless space and time, the more petrifying is the contrast of our own significance, the more contemptible become the pettiness, shortness, and fragility of the individual life. A moral paralysis creeps over us. For a while we comfort ourselves with the notion of self-sacrifice; 'What matter if I pass? Let me think of others!' But the other has become no less contemptible than ourselves; all human griefs alike seem little worth assuaging, human happiness too paltry to be worth increasing . . . the affections die away in a world where everything great and enduring is killed; they die of their own feebleness and bootlessness." The same sense of futility fell upon Herbert Spencer in

[1] *The Future of Science* (Engl. trans., Preface).
[2] *Recollections of my Youth*, p. 292.

reflecting on the results of a lifetime spent in endeavouring to unravel the secrets of the universe on the basis of an agnostic philosophy. In the closing pages of his Autobiography he makes the following confession : " Of the years of the earth's past," he writes, " during which have arisen and passed away low forms of creatures, small and great, which, murdering and being murdered, have gradually evolved, how shall we answer the question—To what end ? Ascending to wider problems, in which way are we to interpret the lifelessness of the greater celestial masses—the giant planets and the sun, in proportion to which the habitable planets are mere nothings ? If we pass from these relatively near bodies to the thirty millions of remote suns and solar systems, wherever shall we find a reason for all this apparently unconscious existence, infinite in amount compared with the existence that is conscious—a waste universe as it seems ? Then behind these mysteries lies the all-embracing mystery—whence this universal transformation which has gone on unceasingly throughout a past eternity, and will go on unceasingly throughout a future eternity ? And along with this rises the paralysing thought—what if, of all that is thus incomprehensible to us, there exists no comprehension anywhere ? No wonder men take refuge in authoritative dogma ! . . . Thus religious creeds, which in one way or other occupy the sphere that rational interpretation seeks to occupy and fails, and fails the more it seeks, I have come to regard with sympathy based on a community of need ; feeling that dissent from them results from inability to accept the solutions offered, joined with a wish that solutions could be found."

Our post-Victorian thinkers of similar outlook, in spite of evident struggles to sound a cheerful note,

fail to lighten the gloom which follows loss of faith in the divine guidance of the world. The alternatives to a belief in the old Providential creed would seem to be a crude Hedonism, intent on making the "best" of our present span of life (in rather a sad spirit it must be confessed) as expressed in the writings of John Davidson—a policy which often means making the worst of it [1]; or a pessimism shading off on the one side into the contemplative melancholy of an Amiel, in love with the old ideals, yet able to find no sanction for them in the natural order, on the other, in the bravado of a Nietzsche, with his exaltation of brute force, and the cult of a suppositious Superman—a position leading logically to the world-catastrophe of 1914–18 with its tragic consequences; or, finally, to a vaguely-conceived socialistic reconstruction based on a purely sentimental estimate of human worth as expounded in the writings of Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells, and some lesser lights in the present rather foggy literary sky. Nowhere outside the circles of religious thought is there any confident note of optimism as regards the inherent value of life, or the future of the human race; even the brief passion for the elaboration of fanciful Utopias which marked the beginning of the century has died a natural and unlamented death. It would seem after all that the New Jerusalem, if it is to come at all, must come by way of heaven, rather than through the confused strivings of a blinded earth.

The absence of an alternative creed, however, is not

[1] See his *Mammon and His Message*, a trilogy glorifying the Gospel of Materialism, where a frank acceptance of its unethical implications is made, as in the lines:

> "A sense of sin is rust: go on to sin,
> And make the sense of it a constant joy;
> The sin's the man; keep your soul bright with sin."

the only, nor the chief reason for attempting a reconstruction of the old grounds of belief, or its renewal on a fresh foundation. There are two reasons why the conditions of present-day thought are favourable to such an attempt.

1. In the first place, the *break-up of the old Welt-Anschauung, or World-View, was inevitable.* Humanity has permanently outgrown the parochial theory of existence. Men's thoughts have been widened " with the process of the suns " beyond the scope of those easy categories which satisfied our forefathers, which can be now retained only by shutting our eyes to a whole range of facts that have long been clamouring for recognition and can no longer be ignored by thoughtful minds. It will be our task to face these facts frankly and fearlessly, and to ask ourselves whether by broadening our conceptions it is possible to reconstruct a theory of life which is theistic in its basis and providential in its method. If we can do so, we shall find a great benefit in the temporary unsettlement through which we are now passing. The enlargement of the bounds of knowledge, and the clarifying of the eye that contemplates them, have freed the soul from the incubus of many superstitions and superfluities of belief. Yet, back of all our scepticisms, there is a wistful longing for some way of return to the attitude of faith and happy confidence in the beneficent nature of the world-process, and in the presence of a kindly power, " whose goodness is over all His works."

2. Secondly, there is a real *lightening of the horizon* of human thought in one significant direction. During the last century man has entered on a new era in his relation to the external universe. It is the practical realisation of the function assigned to him in the

ancient commission, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and *subdue* it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."[1] According to the spirit of these words Man is God's vicegerent on earth, into whose hands have been committed the physical and organic resources of the world in so far as he can make use of them for his own benefit. Throughout the ages there has been a slow increase in control over the lower creatures and of the forces of nature on the part of mankind—so slow indeed as to be scarcely perceptible. During the last century or two this pace has quickened at an unprecedented rate—especially of late. The nineteenth century was a period when man's knowledge of nature, and of the possibilities of using her energies for human ends, was increased by leaps and bounds; in other words, it was the era not only of discovery, but of invention. The advance was not only in perfecting beginnings already made, but in entirely fresh departures, such as had never been dreamt of before. As a result, mankind stands to-day in a position of vantage in relation to the forces of the world-order, unparalleled in any previous age, and the race has the prospect of attaining to a sovereignty over nature in a real and effective sense. In other words, man is now able to master his environment, and control his destiny, and be a Providence unto himself, in a way impossible till now. It is not necessary to-day as in earlier times to depend on external supernatural guidance for escape from many of the evils of life; a large number of diseases have been mastered or eliminated from the category of human troubles; many of the natural forces which were

[1] Gen. i. 28. Cf. Psalm viii.

formerly a source of perpetual anxiety, and often of terrible destruction, have now become efficient and obedient servants of our will ; there is an ever-expanding vista of greater victories to come in every domain of human activity.

This expansion of power over the forces of Nature will become a blessing or a curse according as men rise to a sense of the responsibility which it entails, or use it for selfish personal or communal ends. How terrible such a gift may become we have seen on a world-scale during the world-war of 1914–18, when the sovereignty of man over Nature was used in a wild struggle for international supremacy, resulting in dissipation of wealth it had taken centuries to accumulate, and in a tragedy of suffering unparalleled in the world's history. It is now clear that without some sense of a divine sanction, under which the passions of men must be restrained and the higher uses of human power must be exercised, the prospect of a progressive world-civilisation would be small indeed.

On the other hand, how different does this accession of power over nature appear on the basis of faith in a Providential order ! Once this conception were regained, and more or less universally recognised, we should feel that man was a creature being at last taken into a real partnership with the Over-soul of the world, and initiated into the mysteries of its government with a view to attain spiritual ends possible in no other way. The long struggles undergone in wresting Nature's secrets would be seen to be a wise apprenticeship for the great task for which he had all along been destined—a discipline for the adequate fulfilment of a career of unexampled opportunity and splendid possibilities. By exercising his stewardship in the

spirit of divine sonship and of universal human brotherhood, a new chapter in his troubled history would gradually dawn, and the earth would become a stage for a divine-human drama well worth the long experience of struggle, sorrow, and futile effort during which that stage was being cleared for action ; and the real history of man would begin.

How then to regain the faith in God's Providential Order will be our subject in this volume, leaving to a later the story of man's preparation and equipment for his sub-Providential function, and the opportunity just opening for its fuller and finer pursuit.

BOOK I

THE CHRISTIAN THEORY OF PROVIDENCE

"'O where is the sea?' the fishes cried,
As they swam the crystal clearness through.
'We have heard of it old of the ocean tide
And we long to gaze on its waters blue.'"

ANON.

"I could not seek Thee, hadst Thou not already found me."

AUGUSTINE

CHAPTER I

THE PATHWAY OF EXPERIENCE TO GOD

THE doctrine of Providence is corollary to the doctrine of God. "No God—no Providence" is the necessary postulate of thought on the subject. There can be no Providence if there be no Provider; no care for man if there be no One to care for him. Providence implies a Creator and Sustainer of the world, with a heart to feel and a hand to provide for the necessities of His creatures, and with foresight and power to control the flow of events in their interests. It will therefore be needful in the first instance to indicate summarily the grounds of our belief in the Being and Character of God, and to formulate at least a working theory of His relation to the universe which is the expression of His purpose and will, with special reference to man as the destined co-partner with Him in His providential activities.

Here we will forsake the well-worn pathway of "proofs" of the existence of God as being secondary to our purpose, and deal with the intuitive evidence provided in the story of man's religious experience as a spiritual being, which is the "raw material" of all intellectual formulations of religious belief. This is not to undervalue these "proofs" in their proper place, but to explore a field which has hitherto been

much neglected by religious thinkers, and which after all is the prime source of all the more developed and abstract arguments for a religious view of the universe.

I

As a matter of fact, men, being religious by nature, have always had a sense, dim or clear, of the presence of the Divine. This experience is so widespread, if not universal, that the wonder is not that they should believe in God, but that they should ever doubt His existence. The simplest savage and the youngest child do not need to be persuaded of this belief; they have it already; it is in a sense the most powerful (often the most oppressive) of all immediate experiences. A keenly observant missionary bears witness to the fact that in preaching to heathen people it was to him a constant matter of astonishment to see how a thoroughly inadequate presentation of the Word—which could only hint at its meaning in a difficult foreign tongue, and had to work with alien conceptions—could at times win so surprisingly deep and inward an acceptance. The best results, he says, were due to the responsive apprehension that came out of the hearer's heart half-way to meet the presented truth.[1] The conception of this divine element is often grotesque, unethical, even repulsive, but of the ubiquity of the experience there can be no longer any doubt. No man is born a sceptic; the dice of the unsophisticated judgment are always loaded on the side of faith. It is not too much to affirm that men have rather to persuade themselves to doubt the existence of God

[1] See Rudolph Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* (pp. 166, 167). All religions are in this sense a *preparatio evangelica* for the reception of the Gospel.

than to affirm it. The raw material of religious faith is to be found in every man.

It is strange that it has been left to a twentieth-century religious philosopher to make the first attempt to deal seriously and systematically with this " raw material " of religious formulation or even conception of its content. Rudolph Otto's *The Idea of the Holy* carries us into that region of groping apprehension of religious reality which forms the background of religious thought, and notes some of its salient characteristics. It is pointed out in the translator's preface that the author avoids the " two chief defects of modern study of the phenomena of religious experience "—the undue weight it has laid on abnormal or supernormal features of that experience, and its subjective tendency to concentrate on feeling to the neglect of its objective cause. Professor Otto, on the other hand, " ransacks the ages and spoils the climes " in search of the normal and universal reactions in religious consciousness which are found in all religions, which, however diverse in form, build on the same foundations and use the same psychic material; and he points out that in all there is a growing " awareness of an Object "—Deity—" the confrontation of the human mind with a Something or Someone which is from the first felt as a transcendent Presence—the Beyond or Wholly Other, even where it is also felt as ' within man.' " His analysis of this religious awareness is the theme of the book. He calls it the " numinous " sense; a mental state perfectly *sui generis* and irreducible to any other; and therefore " like every absolutely primary and elementary datum, while it admits of being discussed, it cannot be strictly defined." [1] It is impossible here to attempt a summary

[1] Otto, p. 7.

of the work (one of the most condensed pieces of thinking recently published), but a brief outline of the argument may be given.

The fundamental fact in religion, to quote from another writer who made the phenomena of religious experience his special study—William James—is that there is in the human consciousness " a sense *of reality*, a *feeling of objective presence*, a perception of what we may call ' *something there*,' more deep and more general than any of the special and particular ' senses ' by which the current psychology supposes existent realities to be originally revealed." [1] The effect of the impact of this reality on the human consciousness is to produce in the first instance a *sense of creaturehood*, accompanied by a feeling of *self-depreciation*, of being but " dust and ashes." This Object is envisaged as a *mysterium tremendum* which comes home to us in many ways. " The feeling of it may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide, pervading the mind with a tranquil mood of deepest worship. It may pass over into a more set and lasting attitude of the soul, continuing, as it were, brilliantly vibrant and resonant, until at last it dies away, and the soul resumes its profane, non-religious mood of everyday experience. It may burst in sudden eruption from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements, to intoxicated frenzy, to transport and to ecstasy. It has its wild and demonic forms, and can sink to an almost grisly horror and shuddering. It has its crude barbaric antecedents and early manifestations, and again it may be developed into something beautiful and pure and glorious. It may become the hushed, trembling and speechless humility of the creature in the presence of—whom or what ? In the

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 58.

presence of that which is Mystery inexpressible and above all creatures." [1] Most languages are rich in words and epithets describing the various emotional reactions suggested in the above passage. In English we have such words as tremor, fear, dread, shuddering, "demonic" or "ghostly" dread, eerie, weird—words that represent the primitive religious emotions; awe, reverence, the "fear" of God (with its correlative to "wrath" of God as its objective aspect) suggest a later stage, when the ethical element begins to creep in; while "mystic dread," a sense of the "nothingness of self" compared with the majesty and awful holiness of the Most High, and the plenitude of energy in the living God, suggest the heights and depths of spiritual response. In one aspect the Divine presents itself to the mystical sense as the "Wholly Other," while at other times a feeling of profound identification with the Divine fills the soul with ecstasy. The "fascinating" side of the religious apprehension of the Divine as of something which compels our attention while holding us in profound subjection and abasement is represented in the words wonder, admiration, yearning, leading to the attitudes of worship, praise, sacrifice, petition, thanksgiving and prayer (in its widest sense), feeling and acts called forth by the apprehension of the divine qualities of pity, mercy, cleansing-power, and redeeming love as revealed in the higher religions. The crowning experiences of religious faith are pictured by the words "the peace of God," beatitude or blessedness, joy, transport, mystic satisfaction and inward calm of soul, all roused by the experience of "redeeming love."

Even this long list of words, expressing the wide gamut of emotional and ethical response to the Numi-

[1] Otto, p 13

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nous Reality we call God, is far from complete, but they suffice to indicate the genuineness, intensity, and rich variety of that response. To say that such profound reactions of human feeling, expressed in the strongest words in the language, correspond to no objective reality, is to make too great a demand on credulity. These words represent a racial experience so acute, so profound, and so universal (as is proved by the vocabularies of all languages from the most savage to the most civilised) that it would be nearer the truth to say that of all Objects the most real and most impressive in its impact on the human soul is the Numinous, the Divine, *Deity*, *God*, or by whatever name He may be called.

II

So far we have been dealing with the emotional background of religious experience, common to all mankind. It is only when we come to the various conceptual or intellectual formulations of this primitive material that we reach diversity and confusion. And of all confusions, the most riotous is the confusion in the conceptions of the Divine Object of this experience which have prevailed and still prevail in the faiths of mankind. Even the most developed and ennobled creeds bear witness to the fact that our spiritual organ of vision is the least perfect we possess. The Apostle Paul is frank enough to confess that in this direction " we see only the baffling reflection in a mirror " [1] and not " face to face." But consider :

1. If the evolutionary theory is true, it is clear, *ex hypothesi*, that the spiritual " sense " is the latest, and therefore, presumably, the least developed of all the aptitudes of the race. When man became man,

[1] 1 Cor. xiii. 12 (Moffatt).

he did so in virtue of experiencing a dawning response to the highest circle of environment in the universe—the world of spiritual reality. In the world of matter he has found himself at home from the first. His prehuman progenitors had been there before him, and, in the infinitely slow steps of the evolutionary process, had been psychically as well as physically adapted to their habitat. Man thus inherited a bodily equipment and a vital endowment already well fitted for commerce with the physical environment; organs and functions corresponded to the objective world with an efficiency that guaranteed racial survival and a reasonable modicum of well-being. But when he began to awake *spiritually*, he found himself in a new and strange environment. He was like a mariner launched on an uncharted sea, moving through storm and stress toward strange lands whose shoreline looms threateningly through swirling mists of apprehension and surmise. The very instruments with which he tried to reduce the confusion of his new experience to something like conceptual order were such as had been developed to meet other needs; even the human intellect was primarily evolved in order to handle the facts and forces of the material world and is at its best in attempting to classify its phenomena and master its meaning. The same is true of language, which, emotional in origin, is physical in its primary implications, and can be adapted to spiritual ends only by straining the uses of physical imagery and by resorting freely to metaphorical subtleties. It is thus only natural that the first emotional response to the spiritual environment was as vague as it was powerful, while the intellectual response was hesitant, tentative, and full of abortive experiments. Again, individuals and races would be differently endowed with spiritual

insight and efficiency; and as they toiled to give conceptual expression to their spiritual intuitions, would evolve systems of ideas of very varying value. This follows from the conditions, and according to the laws, of the evolutionary process.

2. When we turn to the history of religions this is exactly what we find to be the case. The savage religions of to-day are possibly debased forms of more primitive types, and it is scarcely safe to draw too sweeping an inference from the senseless creeds, the extravagant and grotesque rites, and the cruel customs, which characterise their cultus. Recorded history, however, suggests that in the far-distant ages things were hardly, if any, better from an ethical and spiritual point of view. The practice of magic among savage tribes, with their queer ideas of the supernatural and their grotesque rites and ceremonies, is probably a survival of one of the most primitive attempts to translate their numinous experiences into conceptual and practical form. Animism is also one of the earliest efforts to "rationalise" the raw material of religious feeling; so also is the very ancient cultus of dead heroes and ancestors, with the resultant notions of "Spirits" and "Souls" in the Unseen who are supposed to retain some of the power of mischief they possessed during life. Myths are later developments, being conceptual efforts of the imagination to explain facts and experiences of a numinous kind. In Greek and Roman religion, and in many Eastern cults, with their endless and often dramatic legends and myths of the gods, we have a more developed stage of the work of the creative religious imagination, partially winnowed of the grosser elements of earlier times, but still deeply stained with sexual and unethical elements. Among the Semites the notions of "clean" and "un-

clean," "pure" and "impure," are the germs of a very important development leading at last to the idea of the "holy" and the "sacred" in their ethical connotations, from which the highest conceptual description of God as the Holy and Righteous and Loving One is derived by a gradual process of development.

When we thus follow out the course of religious history and realise the vast confusion and slow purification of the conceptual ideas of the Object to which or whom the numinous feelings are referred, two conclusions emerge—first, the tremendous power of the numinous experience of mankind, and, secondly, the extreme difficulty of reducing this response (at first chiefly emotional) to a valid system of conceptional thought. Is it any wonder that under such conditions the earlier (and many of the later) "values" of religious thought have been so poor, and often so mischievous? That religion from of old has been full of contradictory influences; that its story is one of tragic mistakes and of doubtful efficacy; and that it has only slowly worked out for the benefit of the race as a whole? Professor A. C. Harding thus summarises the mixed influence of religion on human life, in words in which there is little or no exaggeration:

"Religion has fostered everything valuable to human life, and has obstructed everything; it has welded States and disintegrated them; it has rescued races, and it has oppressed them, destroyed them, condemned them to perpetual wandering and outlawry. It has raised the value of human life, and it has depressed the esteem of that life almost to the point of vanishing; it has honoured womanhood, and it has slandered marriage. Here is an energy of huge

potency but of ambiguous character. From such a survey but one uncontradicted impression emerges : *the thing has been radical*, it has had a grip upon the original instincts of human nature ; it has known how to swirl into its own vortex all the currents of love, of hunger, and of self-defence ; and it has been able to put these severally at its feet." [1] What it has not yet done is to conceptualise the highest form of religion into a system of reasoned thought that commands the complete and convinced acceptance of even those who agree that it is the highest and the most authoritative experience of mankind ; and, even so, it has not succeeded in two thousand years in winning the assent of more than a fraction of the human race. There are many reasons for this ; but among them is certainly the fact that its votaries have not been sufficiently agreed among themselves to present a united front to the lower faiths of the world.

III

There is still another feature of the evolutionary process which finds its parallel in the religious history of mankind. The line of upward progress in organic life has been narrow and tortuous ; there have been many lines of organic departure laterally ; and not a few others, marking the path to degeneracy and ultimate extinction. The present genera and species of living creatures, innumerable though they be, are survivals of possibly as many others which have wholly disappeared, "leaving not a wrack behind." What is certain is that there was only one central line of development leading manward, and in this line there are still many gaps in the record which will possibly never be fully filled.

[1] *The Meaning of God in Human Life*, pp. 14, 15

It is from this point of view that we must view the development of the religions of the past. They have been many and various; to the casual view man's religious career has produced a chaotic and irrational mass of beliefs and practices which it is impossible to reduce to system and order. Only by the comparative historical method can anything be made of it at all; and only by following one line of development can we see anything like continuous progress. The Hebrew people were no more religious than their neighbours—the Babylonians and the Egyptians; but while the religions of Babylon, Egypt, Greece, and Rome led nowhere, and have perished from the earth, the process of spiritual development through the Hebrews has been continuous, and is still unspent. The Bible is the literary deposit of this wonderful religious movement from Abraham to Jesus—a movement which was the synthesis of the pressure of the Numinous on the objective side, with the ever-clarifying response of the human spirit on the subjective. This is not the place to review this story in detail, or to show by what steps and stages, and under what divine and human influences Jahweh, the once tribal god of the Hebrews, became finally revealed as the Creator and Ruler of the universe—nay, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom dwelt "the fullness of the Godhead bodily," and in whose face "shone the glory" of Uncreated Deity. There were lateral developments of religion in other lands and among other races of mankind, and two groups of religious cults, one in India, and the other in China, which have held sway for many centuries over vast tracts of the earth's surface, but there has been no element of steady progress in their creed or in their influence; while Judaism, when it turned from its true line of develop-

ment in Christianity, became one of the stagnant faiths, and Islam—the Ishmael child of Judaism—was from its birth the religion of nomad peoples, and is still most at home among those who dwell in tents, and in the desert places of the earth. But from its birth Christianity has carried itself with the air of a universal religion, and has had the light of the future on its brow. This has been in virtue of three characteristics which are vitally necessary to the continued and healthful progress of any religion.

1. In the first place, *it has preserved in its intensity the numinous element in religion*, and it has transmuted it into its highest equivalents. As the textbook of our faith, the Bible overflows with the " numinous." It is largely the story of the numinous factor in Semitic religion, reaching its crown and climax in the story of the Gospel, and in the Person of Jesus as its significance is unfolded in the Epistles. " Here Mystery dwells and moves in all its potency. It is present in the ideas of the demonic and angelic world, which, as ' wholly other,' surrounds, transcends and permeates this world of ours ; it is potent in the Biblical eschatology and in the idea of the kingdom of God, contrasted with the natural order, now as being future in time, now as being eternal, but always as the downright marvellous and ' other ' ; finally it expresses itself in the character of Jahweh and Elohim, that God who as the ' Heavenly Father ' of Jesus ' fulfils,' not loses, His character as Jahweh."[1] The one perfectly " numinous " personality in history is that of Jesus Himself, who, while one with men, was yet entirely " other " to them, and while bearing Himself among His followers as a familiar friend, had that in Him which filled them with perpetual wonder and irrepres-

[1] See Otto, chaps. xix, xx (passim).

sible awe at the lofty and unapproachable aloofness of His fellowship with God. This fellowship was so unique that it carried with it to those who knew Him intimately the conviction that in Him the very Godhead was present, so that those who "knew Him, knew the Father," and this has persisted throughout the ages among those who have most deeply experienced His influence and work in and for them. How far this impression can be made to account for the numinous halo of wonderful elements in the Gospel narratives—the supernatural birth stories, the miracles, the open grave at the Resurrection, etc.—is a position which criticism is busily discussing at present, the issue of which is by no means so clear as some "advanced" scholars seem to imagine. Be this as it may, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that more wonderful than all that is reported of Jesus is His own personality, in which are felt to be numinous elements which can only be adequately expressed as the "glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ." A naturalistic Christianity is a contradiction in terms. It leaves us where it finds us, looking up from a dead earth into a soulless heaven.

2. In the second place, we find in Christianity alone *a free and perpetually active process of "rationalisation"* going on from the earliest times, by which we mean the attempt to penetrate the numinous field of experience with the weapons of intellectual insight in the interests of mental clarity and of adequate conceptual thought. "Of Christianity at least it is false that 'feeling is all, the name but sound and smoke' (Goethe's *Faust*); where 'name' stands for conception or thought. Rather we count this the very mark and criterion of a religion's high rank and superior value—that it should have no lack of *conceptions* about

God; that it should admit knowledge—the knowledge that comes by faith—of the transcendent in terms of conceptual thought. . . . Christianity not only possesses these conceptions, but possesses them in unique clarity and abundance, and this is, though not the sole or even the chief, yet a very real, sign of its superiority over religions of other forms and at other levels." [1] This is but to say that the evolution of Christian doctrine is as unique a feature of Christianity as is the profound mystery at its heart. Born in the midst of a number of vital religious movements in the Roman world, each keenly combative, and profoundly anxious to prove itself the only way of life, Christianity had from the first to give an account of itself at the bar of thought, as well as in the arena of experience. The history of Christian doctrine throughout the centuries bears a continuous and brilliant witness to its vitality in this respect.

It is sometimes claimed that Christianity conquered the Western world not by the cogency of its thinking, but by the beauty of the lives of its exponents. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church." In the sense that life is always more than thought this of course is true. But the implied contrast between life and thought is mischievous and untrue; and this for two reasons. In the first place, unless we conquer the confused mass of experience in the interests of reason, and reduce it to some kind of conceptual system, we remain at the mercy of instinctive feeling, and life loses vision, harmony, and direction. This is what always happens when thought abdicates its interpretative, co-ordinating, and purposive function, in religion as in everything else. If we cannot "give a reason for the faith that is in us," faith itself either

[1] Otto, op. cit., p. 1.

grows weary, or on the other hand rushes into extravagances of superstition, or into a rage of senseless persecution against those who try to keep the flame of thought alive. And, secondly, thought is an ineradicable element in all high and fruitful experience. Our reasoning faculties are not superimposed on a life otherwise integral and complete, but experience reaches its highest and richest development on the intellectual-conative side, and only as we think truly and act wisely can we have an adequate human experience. Apart from this, we are as the brutes that perish. Instead therefore of depreciating the function of thought in the history of the Christian Faith as distinguished from "experience," it should be our glory and boast that the Church has in all ages produced great thinkers, has never ceased to adapt itself to its intellectual environment, and has produced the most living and complete conceptual system of ideas in the history of religion.

3. The third and crowning quality of Christianity has thus been already suggested. It is the one historic faith which, without minimising the numinous element in human experience, has *winnowed it of its grosser features*, and *expressed it in its purest forms*. The progressive revelation of the character of God in the Old Testament marks the nascent stages of this movement. In the New the process is suddenly complete. The cruder manifestations of religious feeling had been partially clarified under the central creative concept of Jahweh as the eternally Holy One; but in Jesus this attribute was incarnated in a personality so commanding in its appeal, and so rich in its mystery, so purely human and so transcendently divine, that henceforth and for ever religion both on its affective and its intellectual side has been indissolubly identified

with the significance of His Person and Work for the soul of man. In Him all the central facts and ruling principles of religious experience at once gained a richer content and a fuller meaning. It was as though the sun, hitherto hidden behind mists and darkness, had suddenly flashed on the world of confusion and shadows, and man found himself in the light of day, with its clarity of vision and its sanity of outlook. True, it was impossible for a long time to see for the "glory of that light"; and not even to-day, after two thousand years, are we able fully to evaluate the spiritual significance of the Saviour, much less fulfil His demands on our allegiance in practical conduct. This, however, is certain—the creative Figure in the Gospels has taken its place permanently at the heart of living religion. The God and Father of Jesus Christ is the only object of worship that can in future satisfy the needs of the soul; and Jesus is the only Way to that Father.

IV

From the standpoint of our special inquiry in this book we must take for granted the chief results of the long process of development in Christian doctrine and concentrate on the Providential aspect of God's relation to the universe, and more particularly to man as the head of the mundane order, so far as that has been revealed to us. In most, if not all religions, there has always been a profound belief in a spiritual Being or beings exercising a critical influence on the course of events and on human destiny. The savage has a riotous sense of the supernatural, not as divorced from the material world, but as intimately intermingled with all natural processes, and with the fate of individuals and nations. This aspect of the numinous has

taken the most grotesque forms, as is proved by the extravagant demonologies of primitive tribes. In the higher historic religions, their pantheons contain deities of worthier (because more human) forms, whose functions have been associated with particular aspects of natural phenomena, such as the principles of life, sex, growth, and other organic activities; or of still more distinctively human relationships; and usually, behind all has loomed the sometimes sinister, but always impressive figure of that Absolute Being which, under many names, stands for the determining and ultimate Fate whose will both gods and men must, at long last, obey. In Christianity these secondary beings disappear in the revelation of the ultimate Being as the infinitely holy and loving Father, whose will is manifested in the constitution of the physical universe, and in the nature and ideal destiny of man as His child, whom He has—

> " Fixed amid this dance
> Of plastic circumstance,
> This present thou forsooth wouldst fain arrest,
> Machinery just meant
> To give thy soul its bent,
> Try thee and fit thee forth sufficiently impressed," [1]

for the attainment of complete personality in fellowship with his brotherman and with Himself as the Father of all souls.

Having arrived at this point, we must ask the reader to take for granted the fundamental background of Christian philosophy and doctrine in so far as concerns the problems of the Providential Order as such. There is no lack of material to hand on these prolegomena to our proper subject. We must for lack of space assume the following positions as capable of being

[1] Browning, " Rabbi Ben Ezra."

cogently held by open-minded religious thinkers in the face of all reasonable objections :

1. That the universe is fundamentally one in origin and constitution ; that the ultimate Reality from which it proceeds is spiritual in nature and inherently personal in essence ; that at creation this primal Unity gave birth to a proximate dualism of matter and spirit, and in a derivative pluralism in the emergence of the world of men as personal free agents (and therefore ethical in nature). This is Spiritual Monism, which excludes such alternative theories of Reality as Materialism, Monism, and Radical Dualism, but is consistent with certain forms of Idealism and Realism.

2. That the relation of the ultimate creative Being to all created existence is transcendent-immanent in nature. This is Theism, which is our theological postulate. This rules out Pantheism (" God is all " and " all is God "), which identifies God with the universe ; and Deism (" God made the universe so that it is self-contained, while He dwells apart from it "), which separates God from the universe which He has made. Thus, while Pantheism posits the immanence of God, it denies or ignores His transcendence, and Deism affirms His transcendence while denying or ignoring His immanence. Theism accepts what is common and rejects what is exclusive in these theories, affirming both the transcendence of God over, and His immanence within, the universe.

3. That the central and essential attribute of Reality is goodness, i.e. Holy Love, in both God and man, who is " made in His image " ; and that all secondary qualities take their relative significance and place from that ultimate value. The aim of Holy Love is to promote the highest interests of both the subject and object of that love, considered in them-

selves and in their relation to each other as free personal agents. This excludes dogmatic Optimism as a value-theory of existence ("this is the best of all possible worlds," or "whatever is, is best") and Pessimism ("this is the worst of all possible worlds"), and may be called Meliorism[1] ("this is a world of the best possibilities"). This is our *practical postulate*, as being, in our judgment, the only world-view consistent with the Christian view of Reality. This theory safeguards the interests of personality in God and man, and enables us to regard man as a true agent in his own life, and in world-affairs; it promotes the sense of responsibility in conduct, as capable of doing permanent mischief on the one side, and on the other as having a real share in helping to carry on the world-process towards its ideal end; it is prohibitive of despair as to the ultimate fate of the universe on its moral side; it is stimulative of hope that, in spite of the sad facts of life and the instability of progress, if only man joins his forces to those of the divine purpose, "the best is yet to be," and the final end of history can be made sure and safe.

From these various standpoints, which at bottom are one and the same, we can proceed to our proper task in this book. Our problem is to justify the ways of God as the supreme Ruler of the universe in the face of the modern scientific view of the natural order.

[1] This word was invented by George Eliot to represent her attitude towards life, and accepted by Sully (*Pessimism*, p. 399), as a practical conception "lying midway between the extremes of Optimism and Pessimism." By it he understands "the faith which affirms not merely our power of lessening evil—which nobody questions—but also our ability to increase the positive amount of good" in the world. In our use of the term, it means that theory of the universe which recognises its perfectibility through the combined energies of God and man.

This central problem resolves itself into various subsidiary problems which will emerge in their turn. We can only deal with them satisfactorily if we remember that the issue is dependent on two constant and intimately related factors, each of which has a real and vital part to play in the total movement of events, and therefore in their ultimate issue. The first is God the Creator, Sustainer, and Ruler of the universe as a whole, who has planned it in wisdom and love, and desires the good of all His creatures ; the second is man, His child, who has been endowed with a free initiative of will, and so is capable of resisting as well as of furthering the purpose of God who brought Him into being for the ends of Holy Love. It is possible to some extent to isolate these two factors, and so to define their proper functions, and evaluate their share on the ultimate result ; and this we will endeavour to do, while constantly bearing the other in view. In this volume we shall confine ourselves as far as may be to the divine aspect of the Providential Order as the sphere of divine activity. In a subsequent volume we hope to deal with man's specific place and function in the world-order, and with the use he has so far made of his God-given faculty of free initiative, and to end with a final synthetic glance at what the world may be, and what it will be, if the human race as a whole can be brought into the " obedience of Christ," i.e. into fellowship and co-operation with God in His providential purpose and activity.

CHAPTER II

THE PROVIDENTIAL ORDER IN OUTLINE

"Come East and West and North
By races and snowflakes,
And carry my purpose forth,
Which never halts nor shakes.
My will fulfilled shall be,
For in daylight and in dark,
My thunderbolt has eyes to see
His way home to his mark."

EMERSON.

THE word "Providence" is commonly used in two senses which must be combined in order to present a complete view of the subject. In the first place, it means the *sustaining* as distinguished from the *creative* operation of the divine activity in the universe, especially with a view to the needs of living creatures, and pre-eminently of mankind as the climax of the organic world, for which in a true sense all the lower orders may be said to exist, as well as the physical world itself, which provides the stage of the drama of life. Secondly, the word "Providence" is used to express the fact of God's moral government of the world in the interests of His wise, holy, and all-controlling ends. In this sense it implies His power, His sovereignty, His moral purpose, His continual and effective control of all that is and all that happens. To quote the words of Calvin: "By Providence we mean not an unconcerned sitting of God in heaven,

from which He merely observes the things that are done in the world, but that all-active and all-concerned *seatedness* on His throne above, by which He governs the world He Himself hath made. So that God as viewed in the glass of His Providence is not only the Maker of all things in a moment, but the perpetual Ruler of all things that He hath created. That Providence therefore which we ascribe to God pertains as much to His operating hands as to His observing eyes." In other words, we are to consider God as the Personal Ruler and Guide as well as Creator and Sustainer of the universe, and holding a special relation to men as free moral agents; but ever and always actively and efficiently directing all forces and wills and events towards His holy ends. This is the Christian view of the Providential Government of God. It is Providence in this double sense that we propose to consider in this work, with special reference to the problems raised by modern thought. In the following chapters we will deal at some length with some of these crucial problems: here we would confine ourselves to a few primary considerations relevant to the fact that the Christian doctrine of Providence is one that lays emphatic stress on the personal aspect of God's activity in nature and history.

I

In the first place, in what way are we to distinguish the preserving or *sustaining* from the *creative* activity of God?

Some prominent theologians (e.g. Jonathan Edwards and Rothe) and many philosophers have identified the two forms of activity, viewing the universe as a continuous act of creation from moment

to moment. Edwards puts the case thus: "God's upholding created substance, or causing the existence in each successive moment, is altogether equivalent to an immediate production out of nothing at each moment." [1] According to Rothe, the universe at any moment is the "self-projection of God into objectivity." [2] His motto is "Kein Gott ohne Welt"—there can be no God without a world through which to express Himself. Another writer likens the universe to a musical note which must be incessantly reproduced in order to exist at all.[3]

If this view be correct, it follows that the world at any particular moment is exactly the world that God means it to be; and He is directly responsible for it in its detail and its totality. Even evil is but a phase of His direct activity. Such a doctrine would land us in Pantheism. It would also mean that everything was annihilated and recreated at each moment, in which case continuity becomes an illusion—like the apparent movement of figures in a kinematograph. Even self-identity would become impossible, for what we call a *thing* would be but *a series of similar things* in rapid succession, and our experience would be but successive phases of consciousness produced in us momentarily by the creative energy of God. Nor could there be any such things as secondary causes on such a theory; all that is and all that operates would be but "pulsations in the universal life of God"; and co-operation between human wills and the divine would become a phrase without meaning.

[1] *Works*, 2, pp. 486–90.

[2] *Dogmatik*, i, pp. 126–60. See also Lotze, *Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 81–94.

[3] Bowne, *Philosophy of Theism*, p. 202.

On the other hand, we affirm that the distinction between creation and preservation is as real as that between the beginning of a fact and the continuance of a process. The former is the calling into being what before did not exist, the latter is giving continuance to what is already in being. God's activity is in both; but it is not the same kind of activity. Further, the objectivity of the world is real; neither the universe nor anything in it is to be identified with God. Still more real is the consciousness of human distinctiveness (though not separation) from God. While I absolutely depend on Him for continued existence, my consciousness tells me that it is a continuous existence that I enjoy; indeed what enables me to know myself as a self at all is the fact of my persistence as the same self from moment to moment. This distinction enables me also to realise the sense of co-operation with the divine activity without being identified with it. I am a *vera causa* through the creative and sustaining power of God, and He has endowed me with a spark of His free initiative, so that I am really responsible for what I will, and for what I do. Thus, Dr. A. H. Strong puts it: "Preservation is midway between the two errors of denying the first cause (Atheism) and denying second causes (continuous creation, or Pantheism)." [1]

II

How are we to conceive of the relation between the divine causation which upholds all things by the word of His power, and of *secondary* causes such as (1) the forces we see in Nature, and (2) human wills?

1. As regards cosmic forces, which the new science

[1] *Systematic Theology*, ii, p. 418.

tends to resolve into multifarious forms or manifestations of one universal energy, the question arises whether we are to identify this power with the essential will of God Himself. If we do so we are once more practically affirming the doctrine of perpetual creation—which we have just repudiated. But we say that *the universe is the projection of His will, through an act of free creative energy, in a particular direction, and under particular conditions.* Having once started the universe on its course, its future development is thus conditioned by its constitution, and *it therefore represents the conditioned will of God,* but not His free personal activity. If this is borne in mind, it will dispose of such questions as "Why does God allow such and such a thing to happen?" What happens is the result of the inter-working of the determinate energies of the universe, and any particular event must be viewed as part of a complex whole, which depends ultimately on the divine will, but any phase of which must not directly and immediately be identified with it, for God's essential will is free, and that cannot be said of the happenings of the physical world. If, however, we push the question back a stage, and ask why a world was made in which such things happen, we are plunged into a mystery which no man can solve. The world is what God has made it; possibly it might have been a different world, but we can conceive of no other kind of world about which the same question might not be asked—which proves that such questions are idle and unmeaning. It is best to take things as they are, and limit our inquiries to such aspects of reality as we can handle intelligently and fruitfully.

2. The relation of the divine will to the operation of the human will is both easier, and more difficult, to

deal with. It is *easier*, since we know the meaning of the word "will" as applied to our own consciousness of activity and freedom, and realise in experience the effect of the clashings and co-operations of our will with that of other persons. It is more *difficult*, because the relation of two or more human wills acting in unison or opposition to one another cannot in many senses be the same as that between the creative and created wills. The analogy fails at its crucial point—we did not create each other, but God has created us all, and must therefore hold a unique relation to all. On any Providential theory of the world, however, we must believe that whereas nothing that we do can be done without the power being given to us by God, He has yet given us a modicum of genuine causal activity which may be exercised in opposition even to Himself.

If men are possessed of a real freedom of initiative, our world at any given time cannot be described as the result solely of the divine activity, but as the resultant of two forms of will—the divine, all-holy will, which has made a world intended for good ends without admixture of moral evil, and the sum of human wills, which may be acting predominantly with or against God's will, according as they are good or evil. This in fact is the world as we know it. With the advent of man on the scene the Providential Order thus changes its character. Only its *possibilities of good and evil* may be wholly ascribed to the Creator; its actualities are to be ascribed partly to His will, and partly to the effects wrought by the free human wills which He has created. The physical world, so far as it is unaffected by man, or other possible free agents, is as God meant it to be; in so far as human action affects it, it is still God's world, but only in proportion to man's co-operation with the will of

God. In its *intention* it is a world in which this unison is complete; in its actual condition it is a world whose course is profoundly affected by man's resistance to or co-operation with the revealed will of God.

Does this fact dethrone God from the seat of authority and effective power? At first sight this would seem to be so. An element of contingency has crept into the course of events; even the ultimate destiny of the universe seems to be thrown into jeopardy. The older theologians, when faced with this problem, were forced to posit what they called the doctrine of *Divine Decrees*; i.e. in order to safeguard the divine sovereignty, they affirmed the causative activity of God in all the happenings of the world—in the evil as well as the good. According to the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, "The decrees of God are His eternal purpose, according to the counsel of His will, whereby for His own glory He hath foreordained *whatsoever comes to pass*." [1] This is the position taken up by all Calvinistic writers, of whom it may be confessed that while they made the divine sovereignty the ultimate postulate to all their religious thinking, they yet—however illogically—retained the keenest sense of human responsibility for sin. They based their argument in the main on Scripture, which they affirmed to be built on the assumption that "all events, whether necessary or contingent" (i.e. free), "good or bad, are included in the purpose of God," and that their "futurition or actual occurrence is rendered absolutely certain." [2] This involved the foreordination of the free acts of men,[3] including even their sinful acts.

[1] *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, 7.
[2] Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, i, p. 542.
[3] Ibid., p. 543.

Appeal is made to the references in Acts ii. 23, etc., to our Lord's betrayal and death: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain," and to our Lord's words regarding His betrayal, "Truly the Son of Man goeth as it is determined; but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed"[1] in which "foreordination and responsibility are by our Lord Himself declared to co-exist and to be consistent."[2] Later writers of the same school made a clearer distinction between God's foreordination of events in general and those involving the free activity of the human will. "All human acts, whether evil or good, enter into the divine plan, and so are objects of God's decrees, although God's actual agency with regard to evil is only a permissive agency."[3] Here the position has weakened considerably, and involves a concession which, if followed to its logical conclusion, is scarcely consistent with foreordination in the strict meaning of the term. It may be said that the recent movement of theological thinking is away from the Calvinistic doctrine of decrees, and that few writers are willing to postulate *foreordination* of the free acts of men, whether virtuous or sinful in character. Probably the reason for this is that we have come to a deeper sense of the significance of personality, divine and human, and to a clearer notion of responsibility. It is impossible to believe that God is in any sense participant in the evil that is in the world, except as necessarily permitting the possibility of its occurrence in a society of moral beings; and foreordination seems

[1] Luke xxii. 22.
[2] Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, p. 544.
[3] A. H. Strong's *Systematic Theology*, p. 354.

a poor word by which to designate such permission. It is better to drop the term altogether from the vocabulary of religious thought, since the idea no longer appeals to us. At its best, it suggests that "block-universe" which has become such a stone of stumbling in the pathway of ethical philosophy; at its worst, it involves more problems for theology than it solves. We cannot in any effective sense think of a free act as foreordained.

This does not involve, however, that we must resolve the universe as a whole into a mere play of contingency. In the first place, it should be remembered that *the human will,* while free within bounds, *is strictly bounded in its freedom.* Man fits into his place in this ordered universe, but he cannot do as he wills with it. The steersman does not control the sea, though he makes its currents carry him to the harbour. We are a part of a larger world than our own freedom; it is an island in a vast ocean of life and movement. Nor can we do as we will even with the little world within which our freedom acts; when all is said and done, things run their course, and we have to bend ourselves to the conditions in which we find ourselves. As the stream carries the eddy in its bosom, so the will of the Eternal moves to its appointed goal, carrying us and our freedom with it.

In the next place, the *relation of the divine will to ours is different from the relation of one human will to another.* Men are in a sense "outside" each other, but none of us are "outside" God. Our isolated acts of volition, once they are projected into a deed or an influence, fall into the general movement of events, over which we have little or no control. That movement is the Providential Order itself, which is controlled and directed by the divine wisdom and power. What

is the exact relation of these two currents of free volition it is impossible to put into words, since we can only explain things by referring them to a larger generalisation of the same kind ; and there is nothing to which we can compare, or under which we can subsume, this unique functioning of the divine and human wills. Speaking tentatively we may say that the human will is an *imperium in imperio*, a lesser function within a larger, which modifies it without determining it. Thus while our action is free and has real results, which have to be taken into account by God, He is not at our mercy, nor are the general ends of His government jeopardised by our action. More than this. While we cannot in any sense hold God responsible for what we do and are—in so far as we act freely—we may legitimately hold that when our evil actions fall into the general stream of divine agency, they become part of the material whereby God works out the larger ends of His holy will and purpose, and He is thus able to make even " the wrath of man to praise Him." That is to say, the moral constitution of the universe is vindicated not only in the tragic issues of evil-doing, and the beneficent results of well-doing, but in the moral values brought out of evil.

Let us illustrate this from two scriptural sources. One of the most interesting stories in the Old Testament is that of Joseph, which, whether it be considered glorified biography or a religious epic founded on tradition, will equally serve our purpose. The pivot of that story is the way in which a dastardly act on the part of Joseph's brethren is turned into the means of his advancement. When after the death of Jacob Joseph's brethren come to him, in abject fear lest he should at last visit them with his vengeance,

and plead their father's dying prayer that he should forgive them, Joseph magnanimously grants their request, he puts his position thus: "Fear not, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." [1] Whoever be the writer who put these words into Joseph's mouth, he was a profound as well as a pious thinker. Joseph was made to see the act through which he became an Egyptian slave from a twofold point of view. In the first place, he recognised that it was an act of treachery arising out of a malevolent will—"as for you, ye thought evil against me." That was its human side. But in the second place, this act, evil as it was, when it fell into the stream of events, was controlled by a Higher hand, in the interests of a beneficent purpose. That was the divine aspect of it; and for Joseph, it was the determining aspect. He was lost in wonder at the way he had been led, through the maze of treachery in which he was thrice entangled, into the great opportunities of his life. Seeing thus how human treachery had been overruled for his and others' good, even the good of the very men who had sold him into slavery, Joseph found it easy to forgive the wrong. And in so doing, he acted on a theory of Providence which is true for all pious souls throughout all ages. Men do good and they do evil; but out of their evil and their good, God has been able to bring about great benefits for the world at large as well as for individuals.

The same truth may be illustrated from a thousand events in history and in individual life. Men and nations are free to form their own plans and to carry them out; but while they are thus following their

[1] Gen. xl. 20.

own ends, and reaching towards their own goal, they are being used for the larger ends of Providence. We intuitively recognise this in our daily experience. A man dies through the carelessness of his chauffeur or the mistake of his doctor ; but no sooner is he dead, than we speak of the event as in some mysterious way in accordance with the will of God ; what we really mean is that the event finds a place in the general economy of the Providential Order, which is carrying on through dark and light, through good and evil, to its destined end.

The second illustration is still more significant. We have already referred to the words of Peter, in the Acts,[1] in which he attributes the crucifixion of his Lord to the malevolence of his enemies, while at the same time in another sense it is according to the "fore-ordination" of God. Without attempting to harmonise these two aspects, Peter saw that they were both true. Jesus was done to death by His enemies, and yet He was delivered up to them by the "determinate will of God." The earthly agents pursued their course irrespective of that will ; none the less (and that without in any way lessening the guilt of the culprits) the confederation of evil agencies that brought about the death of Jesus on the Cross was the means whereby the possible redemption of the whole world was achieved. Here we find the highest historical illustration of a law that runs through the very warp and woof of human affairs. Evil may be outwardly triumphant, but that very triumph becomes the means of the greater triumph of good.

What, then, becomes of the immeasurable difference between good and bad men ? This surely remains where it always has been. The good man helps on

[1] Acts ii. 23.

the divine purpose as an active co-worker, and shares personally in the fulfilment of that purpose; the bad man is in no way interfered with, but he is used as means to an end, and has no share in the triumphant issue of the conflict between the good and evil forces of the universe so long as he is unrepentant. The divine purpose, however, includes every possible influence short of compulsion to bring him back into forgiveness and fellowship in the further development of that purpose. If he finally refuses to come back, there is nothing before him but permanent banishment from the presence of God and from the benefits of His grace. In either case, the moral order is vindicated. Evil is destructive, and for that reason is doomed to final defeat and discomfiture; good is the constructive principle of the universe, and as such is destined to triumph. Its full triumph is found in the union of all good wills with the all-holy will of God.

III

Another preliminary problem of Providence is that referring to the *foreknowledge of God.*

According to the Calvinistic doctrine of decrees the divine foreknowledge was the necessary concomitant or consequent of His foreordination. If the latter is given up at least in the old sense of the word, can we retain the former attribute? Can even God foresee what created free beings will do? Or may we speak of a relative or general foreknowledge of events, of which the details are hidden?

We unquestionably possess such a relative foreknowledge of one another's actions. Without foreseeing how these around us will act in detail under such and such circumstances, we prophesy with con-

fidence in a general way that they will do thus or so. That is partly from our reading of the possibilities of the situation combined with the knowledge we have of the character or predisposing tendencies of others. For we know that as a rule and in a general way men act from habitual motives, and knowing their habits, we infer that under given circumstances they may act in a certain way. We are never, however, safe from miscalculations, and this not only from imperfection of our knowledge of one another, but because men do sometimes, in virtue of their freedom of will, cut themselves off from all habitual lines of action, and strike out new paths for themselves by giving dominance to entirely fresh motives. This may be due to an instinctive or subconscious alteration in their outlook ; it may be due to a radical change of heart ; it may be from a mere whimsical impulse to assert their freedom. In any case we are face to face with a hidden and incalculable element, which cannot be foreseen or accounted for.

Are we to conceive of God as being similarly conditioned as regards the creatures He has made ? This question has been asked from of old in view of the antinomy between divine sovereignty and human freedom, and dates from at least the time of Origen,[1] who was probably the first theologian to deny the absolute foreknowledge of God in view of the reality of free will. For many ages, chiefly through the influence of Augustine, the dogmatic answer prevailed,

[1] Even before that, " Cicero (and, later, the Socinians) supposed the divine prescience limited, as a consequence of human freedom, which, forgetful of the dependence of that freedom upon God, supposed God to be limited by man in a deistic manner ; and a similar result follows from a pantheistic mode of thought, which construes God as development, as in the case of the Stoa " (Dorner, *Dogmatics*, I, 334).

and until a few years ago it would have been deemed impious to reopen it. Both the problems of evolution and of freedom, however, have forced this issue to the front again. Without doing homage either to Pantheism or to Deism, Rothe and Martensen held that God does not know the freely willed acts of men till actually accomplished, nor even the operation of non-volitional forces in so far as these are affected by the influence of the free agency of men. Pluralistic philosophers seemed inclined to posit an element of "spontaneity" or freedom in all real entities, which, if true, would complicate the problem still further. And there is an increasing number of thinkers who, while positing in God a perfect knowledge of all possibilities, would deny Him a prevision of the actualities that result from the interaction of free personalities on their environment, and on each other.

If we were logically driven to this conclusion, how would it affect our doctrine of Providence? Should we not be forced even to deny God's sovereignty as well as His foreknowledge? And would not this mean that for God as well as man the final issue of the cosmic movement would be hidden in the uncertain future, and that there would be no guarantee even for Him that the ideal end for which He has created all things would be fulfilled? Scarcely. William James puts the case in a memorable passage which is worth quoting in full:

"The belief in free will is not in the least incompatible with the belief in Providence, provided you do not restrict the Providence to fulminating nothing but *fatal* decrees. If you allow Him possibilities as well as actualities to the universe, and to carry on His own thinking in these two categories just as we do ours, chance may be there uncontrolled even by Him, and the course of the universe be

really ambiguous ; yet the end of all things may be just what He intended it from all eternity. An analogy will make this clear. Suppose two men before a chess-board, given the one a novice, the other an expert player of the game. The expert intends to beat, but he cannot foresee exactly what any one actual move of his adversary may be. He knows, however, all the possible moves of the latter ; and he knows in advance how to meet each of them by a move of his own which leads in the direction of victory. And the victory infallibly arrives, after no matter how devious a course, in the one predestined form of checkmate to the novice's king. Let now the novice stand for finite evil agents, and the expert for the infinite mind in which the universe lies. Suppose him to say, ' I will lead things to a certain end, but I will not now decide on all the steps thereto. At various points ambiguous possibilities shall be left open, *either* of which at a given instant may become actual. But whichever branch of these bifurcations becomes real, I know what I shall do at the next bifurcation to keep things from drifting away from the final result which I intend. The Creator's plan of the universe would thus be left blank as to many of its actual details, but all possibilities would be marked down. The realisation of this would be left absolutely to ' chance ' ; i.e. would be determined only when the moment of realisation came. Other possibilities would be contingently determined ; i.e. their decision would have to wait till it was seen how the matters of absolute chance fell out. But the rest of the plan, including its final upshot, would be rigorously determined once for all. So the Creator Himself would not need to know all the details of actuality until they came ; and at any time his own view of the world would be a view partly of facts, partly of possibilities, as ours is now. Of one thing, however, he might be certain ; and that is that his world was safe, and that no matter how much it might zigzag, He could surely bring it home at last." [1]

[1] *The Will to Believe*, pp. 180 ff.

It must be confessed that the course even of the sub-human world-order presents many aspects which would fit in with such a scheme of Providence. It would be consistent with the fact that the upward course of evolution is far from being a straight or uniform line, such as one would imagine it to be if a perfect divine plan were being worked out without any interference or disturbance. It moves along a sinuous path, and suggests something like abortive experiments and corrections by the way. From the point of view of human observation, it is exactly what would have occurred if a general plan were being slowly consummated, but in which all kinds of disturbing spontaneities of low intelligence, but full of eager impulse to realise themselves, were being controlled by a wise and far-seeing agency, which was partly dependent on their co-operation, but which knew how in the end to mould them to its ends, however they might digress in the meantime. With the arrival of man on the scene, and his ampler initiative, the apparent disturbance becomes greater, and the divine plan seems to be swerved still farther from its orbit; but when a sufficiently large sweep is taken, it is seen that even here there is a general drift towards the great consummation, as though God, without interfering with the reality of human freedom, were slowly using even its worst aberrations for the accomplishment of His final purpose.

It is, however, by no means clear that we must limit ourselves to this alternative view. It is questionable whether we have any right to commit ourselves to so anthropomorphic a version of the conditions of the divine consciousness; or to imagine that because we cannot ourselves foresee the free acts of our fellow-men and allow for them beforehand, God must

be similarly limited in His outlook on the future. The issues to be safeguarded are, first, the reality of freedom, which excludes not so much foreknowledge as predestination (which would make God logically responsible for our evil as well as our good) ; secondly, a sure faith in the holiness of the divine will ; and thirdly, a clear recognition of the fact that while the final realisation of the holy purpose of God is safe as regards the universe as a whole, there is no equally sure guarantee that all free spirits (whose fate must be ultimately in their own hands, being contingent on the way they exercise their freedom) will share in that victory. True, I cannot *see* how God can perfectly foresee all that may take place in a universe of free moral creatures if that freedom is as real for Him as for themselves ; but as my consciousness is a human one, and His is divine, I have no right to limit His possibilities by my own. And certainly for faith, there is great and happy security in the thought that not only can nothing happen without the permission of God, but that nothing can happen outside His foreseeing love.[1]

[1] " The final goal of this world's development, together with the entire series of its essential necessary stages, must be regarded as fixed in the eternal divine counsel of God ; but the practical carrying out of this eternal counsel, the entire fulness of actual limitations on the part of this world's progress, in so far as these are conditioned by the freedom of the creature, can only be the subject of a conditional foreknowledge ; i.e. they can only be known as possibles, as *Futurabilia*, but not as realities, because other possibles may take place " (Martensen's *Dogmatics*, pp. 218, 219).

Those theologians who, on the contrary, posit the perfect prescience of God, do so either on *a priori* grounds, as a corollary of the divine perfection, or by analogy with our own intuitional and immediate knowledge of things (Julius Muller, *Doctrine of Sin*, ii, pp. 203, 225). This does not lighten the difficulty of conceiving " how there can be in God's mind a subjective certitude with regard to acts in respect of which there is no assignable ground of certainty " (A. H. Strong, *Dogmatics*, p. 286). The subject is

IV

The central principle, however, of the Christian Doctrine of Providence has yet to be enunciated. It is, as already pointed out, a *personal* Providence. The world is controlled and guided not by a vague principle, nor by an unconscious will, but by a Being who is the one perfect and holy Person, by whom all things were created, by whom they are sustained from moment to moment, and whose highest attribute is Holy Love.

This is true whether we consider Providence as the sustaining operation of the divine will in the universe, or as the sphere of His moral government and directive purpose. The personality of God is a truth which we need to recover for faith, for under modern conditions it is not easy to grasp it firmly and to live in its light. Both science and philosophy tend to depersonalise God, the former by viewing the world as a mere theatre of force, and the latter by conceptualising Him into a bare principle, so that He appears only as the Absolute—a term which for most thinkers who adopt it stands for little more than an empty abstraction. And for their special purposes they have a perfect right to do this. The tyranny of these special points of view, however, has invaded the domain of religion and greatly interfered with a sense of the personal nearness and activity of God in our spiritual view of the world.

exceedingly difficult and probably lies beyond the scope of logical much less of experimental solution. We would not dogmatise as to whether or not God has a perfect knowledge of the future ; the argument in this section merely aims at a *modus cognoscendi* for those who feel compelled to deny that doctrine, and yet wish to retain their faith in the certainty that God's will must in either case be finally fulfilled.

For in religion, we repeat, God must be conceived of in a richly concrete and personal way, if we are to deal adequately with the facts, and satisfy the needs of the soul. The word "Providence" loses all its spiritual content if conceived of as a mere system of laws, or a bare and soulless drive of forces. It implies a full and perfect personality as the ground of all existence, whose goodness is over all His works, whose will is being fulfilled in the movement of events, and with whom we, as spiritual beings, are capable of coming into personal relationship. On this theistic basis alone can we build a doctrine of Providence in any real sense.

More particularly, the personal relation of God to the universe implies His activity in three definite directions.

1. In the first place, we must think of God as the *Universal Consciousness*, i.e. as the seat and centre of all knowledge. There is here something of which we can have a positive conception, because we are ourselves conscious beings; but our own consciousness is but a poor picture of the divine, and this for three reasons.

(1) Ours is *partial and fragmentary* at the best, while God's must be *full and complete*. We can hold only a few things in our conscious grasp at any time, and of these only one is really vivid and central, the rest of the field of consciousness fading off rapidly into vagueness: and though we can shift the focus of attention at will, we do this at the expense of losing hold of what moves away to the margin of consciousness. The perfect consciousness of God, on the other hand, must be equally vivid over its whole field —a circle of awareness "whose centre is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere." For only as God holds the whole universe in simultaneous vision

can we think of Him as able to control and direct all things in accordance with His purpose. Whether we believe or not that His vision penetrates completely into the future, and has a clear prevision of the concrete actions of free agents and of their consequences —a question which we must probably leave an open one (see previous section)—He must at least be conceived of as omniscient of all that is, as well as of all possibilities that may be, if He is to be all-controlling. The modern view of Him as a half-blind Demiurge, pushing His way into something like clear though partial self-consciousness in man, is inconsistent with the Christian view of Providence, and is the fruit of a debased anthropomorphism which thinks of God as a " magnified and non-natural man," " Himself the creature of His worshippers." The author of the 139th Psalm long ago obtained a higher glimpse of the working of the divine mind, when he wrote these glowing words : " Whither shall I go from Thy spirit ? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence ? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there ; if I make my bed in hell, behold Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea ; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me ; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from Thee ; but the night shineth as the day ; the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." It is true " such knowledge is too wonderful for me : it is high, I cannot attain unto it "—for how can a creature possessing only a shifting and partial field of consciousness picture one so vast and radiant as that of his Creator ?

(2) Again, our consciousness is *intermittent*, while

God's is *continuous*. We drop one thing out of our immediate knowledge as we pass on to another: the intensity of our consciousness comes and goes: in sleep we sink into total oblivion of our surroundings: to-morrow's field of knowledge will be different from to-day's. In memory, it is true, we can partially recover the contents of past experience; but this is a different kind of consciousness from that of the immediate awareness of a present object of thought. We cannot think of God in this partial and serial manner; for Him memory and present consciousness must be the same, and though the time-series must have meaning for Him as well as for us,[1] we cannot think of Him as being *immersed* in it as we are, nor of such limitation as interferes with the perfect continuity

[1] However difficult it may be for us to form an idea as to what time means to God, the writer holds with Professor Rashdall that "Reality as out of time, or timeless, is certain to lead us further astray from the truth than the assertion that time distinctions are valid, though we cannot tell in what way they present themselves to God, or how far they express the full truth about Reality as a whole. If the position that reality is out of time makes it impossible to ascribe objective validity to our judgment of value, compels us to distort and virtually contradict the ethical part of our thought, and forbids us to give its proper weight to that side of our nature in our speculative construction of ultimate reality, that is one further objection to such a theory. The doctrine of a timeless reality makes the world's history unmeaning and all human effort vain. The Buddhists, whose creed is often patronised by our modern believers in the timeless attributes, at least have the merit of admitting that corollary in their system, however much inconsistency and contradiction there may be in the anti-social æsthetic effort to escape from effort. The Western, who uses this language about the vanity of all that is temporal, neither believes it nor acts as if he believed it. Time and its distinctions as we know them may not express the whole truth about the universe and the ultimate spiritual ground of it, but at least they must express more of it than a, to us, meaningless negation like timelessness" (*The Theory of Good and Evil*, by Hastings Rashdall, vol. 2, p. 245).

as well as completeness of His all-knowledge. "He that watcheth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep" (Ps. cxxi. 3, 4). As omnipresent in all that is the fruit of His creative and sustaining activity, God is omniscient.

(3) Finally, ours is a *superficial* consciousness: we know things in their surface or phenomenal aspects as this or that, here or there, now and then. As the eye cannot penetrate opaque matter, but only play upon its surface, and note its form, colour, and outward texture, our minds cannot grasp the *inwardness* of things in general. But God's intelligence and *consciousness must be penetrative and pervasive of all reality*. True, just as our vision can pierce through transparent, and partially through translucent, objects, so our minds through the intuitive faculty are occasionally able—though feebly—to strike into the inner meaning of reality. The poet, the mystic, the seer, in moments of rapt vision, have this gift, and so far provide a dim suggestion of that *allthroughness* of knowledge without which, indeed, God would not be the perfect personality and all-ruler. "He is not only *before* His creatures, He is also *in* and *with* His creatures, in every moment of their development. . . . His knowledge penetrates the entanglements of this world's progress at every point; the unerring eye of His wisdom discerns in every moment the relation subsisting between free beings and His eternal plan; and His almighty hand, His power pregnant of great designs, guides and influences the world as His counsels require." [1]

2. Secondly, the personal relation of God to His universe implies a continuous and profound *interest*

[1] Martensen's *Dogmatics*, p. 219: "None but a God who knows is able to live at once in Himself and in His creatures" (ibid., p. 94).

in its happenings and its fate. The "impassibility" of God" is no Christian doctrine. The idea of a God who having once made and set His universe going has no further care for it is alien from the inner spirit of our faith. The contrary is affirmed throughout the Bible. In view of the creative stages of matter and life as pictured in the first chapter of Genesis, He is represented as taking pleasure in the quality of His work—"Behold, it was very good" [1] The story of Israel is that of a nation in whom God took a special interest for a great end, which was to prepare the way for the revelation of His universal Fatherhood. In one of His tenderest touches Jesus affirms the interest of God in the meanest of His creatures—"not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father." [2] And in the Christian Gospel generally God is manifested as One who, while sorrowing over human sin, has not been driven into indifference or alienation by it, but who is ever engaged in ministries of reconciliation and redemption.[3] There are many facts and experiences in life which make it difficult for us to realise this great truth of the divine love—the suffering which makes up so large a proportion of conscious existence; the misfortunes that fall on undeserving heads; the divine permission of so many forms of evil among men; the slow and uncertain pathway of history; the apparent silence with which so many cries of agony and prayers for deliverance are met. These are the trials and burdens of faith, beneath which it so often faints and falls. How these perplexities are to be met we shall later on endeavour to point out; meanwhile we must lay emphasis on the fact

[1] Gen. i. 31.
[2] Matt. x. 29.
[3] John iii. 16; Rom. v. 8, etc.

that if the Providence of God is real it implies the truth that He is profoundly and benevolently interested in the welfare of His creatures and in the course of events. There is no pang but awakens an echo in His heart; no cry of distress or longing but is heard, and, in some way, responded to; no deed of evil or goodness that is not noted and met with its appropriate reaction of loving approval or sorrowful anger. The ancient seer could affirm with confidence that "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him."[1] The apostle who had so often experienced the watchful love and care of His Master could say with surer touch, "Cast all your care on Him, for He careth for you."[2] All this is implied in the revelation of God as Love, the essence of which is to be profoundly sensitive to the well-being of its object, and ceaselessly active in its behalf. The other divine attributes are included in this central quality as their vital principle. "Wisdom is its intelligence, might its productivity; the entire natural creation and the entire revelation of righteousness in history are means by which it attains its teleological aims. . . . Viewed in relation to sin, eternal love is compassionate *grace*; viewed in relation to education of sinful man, it is *long-suffering*; viewed in relation to its promises and the hope which it awakens in the hearts of men, it is *faithfulness*[3]; and, we may add, in relation to the fundamental character of God, it is *holiness in redemptive activity*.

3. Thirdly, God, being who and what He is, has that relation to the universe which makes Him its

[1] 2 Chron. xvi. 9.
[2] 1 Pet. v. 7.
[3] Martensen's *Dogmatics*, p. 99.

Sovereign Ruler and Lord. He knows all; He loves all; and He controls and guides all to its destined end. Making the fullest allowance for the reality and scope of freedom in moral creatures, we are not permitted to think of the Providential Order as one *governed* by contingency (though it includes contingencies), and in which no sure goal is to be reached. We have already dealt with the question how far a possible limitation of the divine foreknowledge is consistent with the certainty of His finally realising the divine ends; here we would go farther and affirm positively that for faith nothing can suffice but the joyful affirmation of the ultimate triumph of the holy will of God. This does not include the dogmatic statement that all free creatures must ultimately be brought into willing harmony with that will (freedom, if it is effectual, must imply the possibility of final rebellion); but it does involve the statement that the action and attitude of no created will (however free or powerful) can be permitted to balk the divine purpose as a whole, or to bring ultimate confusion into the moral order. At present we cannot affirm that the course of the world is wholly a *moral order*, for the facts are otherwise; but a Christian theory of Providence does affirm (what the facts also corroborate) that there is an ideal order, *witnessed to by conscience as what ought to be*, which is slowly being realised in the course of history, whose perfect realisation depends on the free co-operation of the divine will and the human in all that makes for the coming of the Kingdom of Grace.

V

This personal character of the divine government is the religious equivalent of the philosophical doctrine of

the immanent-transcendent activity of God in Nature and in history.

It is of the essence of self-conscious personality that it should be partly immanent in the objective order, and partly transcendent in relation to it. Living beings (such as the lower animals) which are totally immersed in their environment can have no sense of detachment, or even of distinction from it. It is in virtue of the fact that man is partly in and partly above the natural order that he is able to put himself over against it and differentiate the ego from the non-ego in experience. Otherwise he would have no sense of self-identity, and there would be no possibility of knowledge. Our oneness with the objective universe gives us the *materials* of knowledge; our distinction from it enables us to realise and deal with this material as *knowledge*. The same distinction follows us into our ethical life. Our conduct is effective in virtue of our being one with the physical order; our will is free because we are spiritual beings and therefore transcend the physical. We have but to raise these aspects of experience to their highest terms to realise something of the relation of God to the universe. He works in and through it as immanent; He directs and controls it as transcendent. If all that is of God were His immanence in Nature, we should not be able to distinguish Him from Nature (Pantheism); if all were His transcendence it would not be possible for Him to have anything to do with Nature, for He would not only be distinct from it, but separate from it (thorough-going Deism). By affirming His immanence, we are able to conceive of Nature as being animated and sustained by His will; by affirming His transcendence we can conceive Him as truly personal, and the universe as dependent on Him both

for its existence and its end. It is as transcendent that God creates and directs, as immanent that He upholds, and energises in, the world.

We must grasp this exposition of the twofold activity of God in relation to the universe and to man, and keep the two aspects in just balance and proportion in view of the oscillations of philosophic thought, which tend to put undue emphasis now on the one and now on the other of them.[1] There was a time when the transcendence of God was made so much of that Nature was emptied of her spiritual significance, thus preparing the way for the materialistic and agnostic science of the last century. Recently His immanence has been recovered for thought, but it has been at the expense of the complementary truth, which it is time to reaffirm in the interests of religion. For in religion it is not true that " it is with the immanent God that we have to do " ; we have to do with Him in both aspects, but more especially as transcendent, since it is as such alone that we can safeguard our conception of His personality, and of His rulership of the world. We find Him *in* the world none the less because we realise that He is not wholly identified with it. *A universe held in the hollow of God's hand is greater than one in which He would be totally immersed.*

In theologic language, we do not speak of immanent and transcendent, but of the natural and supernatural. The tendency of philosophy to minimise the transcendent activity of God reappears in theology as an unwillingness to use the word " supernatural," not only because of its unhappy associations, but because it is identified in the minds of many with a type of thinking which is outworn—as though there were two planes of divine activity sharply divided,

[1] Martensen, op. cit., pp. 219, 220.

which had no point of connection except as the one "broke through" and interfered with the other. Thus Martensen speaks of "those works as immanent (or natural) wherein the divine Providence encloses itself in the laws of this world's progress, and reveals itself in the form of sustaining power in the moral order of things," and of those of its operations as transcendent (or supernatural) wherein the course of history *is interrupted* and the divine will *breaks forth* in creative and commanding manifestations." [1] This statement no longer satisfies the conditions of thought. We cannot think of the course of history as being "interrupted" by a supernatural agency, or of the "breaking forth" of the divine will in disturbance of the ordinary course of events. The true relation of the immanent and transcendent, the natural and the supernatural is partially symbolised by that between the mind and the brain. Our mental operations and the movement of our brain-cells are intimately correlated; the brain is the organ of the mind, and the mind uses the brain, but there is no "interruption" of the physical process by the mental, nor any "breaking forth" of fresh force into the brain when the will uses it for a special purpose. Thus, any given act may be viewed either from its physical side as a manifestation of nervous energy expending itself in molecular movements; or from its psychic side as a conscious act expressing the character of a spiritual agent. So history may be viewed either as the interworking of events on the human plane, related on their physical and sociological side as cause and effect in a perfectly natural way; or as a moral drama in which God uses these events for the effectual working out of His spiritual purposes, and for the gradual (or sudden)

[1] *Dogmatics*, pp. 219, 220 (italics mine).

revelation of His mind and will. Again, some of our actions are habitual, and represent the settled and orderly movement of our minds; others are unexpected and exceptional, being an assertion of our free initiative, opening out a fresh glimpse into our moral resources and the quality of our personality; in both cases the physical concomitants of our action are uniform and equivalent—so much brain activity, so much expenditure of nervous energy. Similarly in history there are movements which represent the steady and gradual working out of the divine purpose; and others in which a special grouping of circumstances and events suggests a special personal activity of God in human affairs; but there is no breach of causal continuity on the phenomenal side, no "interruption" of the events from outside as by an influx of transcendent or supernatural energy. The whole process is natural or supernatural according as we view it from the one side or the other—as a chain of events causally related on the physical and human side, or as a moral drama in whose tense situations and revealing climaxes the character of the controlling agent is thrown into brilliant relief. Once more, just as the human will can direct the physical forces through which it acts to definite moral ends *without breaking their continuity*, so God in a far more intimate and effectual way can and does control the general currents of history to His own ends without introducing any "disturbance" into the physical order. The "Power from on high" to which reference is made in Acts i. 8, and the many Old Testament references to the "mighty arm" and "mighty works" of God must be recognised not as irruptions of fresh energy breaking through from the unseen and swelling the current of physical energy in the visible order, but as

clearer manifestations of spiritual wisdom in the ordering of events, or reinforcements of spiritual influence in the souls of men.

VI

In view of these remarks light is shed on two pressing problems.

1. How are we to *conceive of the so-called miraculous element in history, and especially in the Bible?* Till quite recently it was universally believed that at certain points in the story of the chosen people, God had personally "intervened" in such a way as to create a breach in the chain of events through which His personal presence and activity were specially manifested for spiritual ends. For the modern man, with whom the law of conservation, and the unbroken sequence of cause and effect in the physical world, have become axioms of thought, such an idea brings intellectual confusion rather than spiritual enlightenment. True, those who hold a theistic faith and believe in the untrammelled creative power of God, are not bound by the intellectual assumptions of the age, and are free to believe that He could to-day alter the forces of Nature in accordance with the ends of His wisdom and love as easily as He created them. But it is possible to retain our faith in the perfect orderliness and sequence of all natural processes, and yet believe in such miracles as can be historically attested. The relation between the miraculous activity of God and the operation of "natural" laws may be further illustrated by the activity of the human will in relation to those "laws." We act on Nature not by introducing a "break" into the sequence of events, but by the operation of

our intelligence and will on them, which *alters their direction and grouping* without altering in the slightest degree the total amount of energy involved. In manufacturing an explosive, for instance, the chemist merely brings into juxtaposition certain substances in unstable equilibrium, which, on the production of a spark, or sudden release of pressure, act on each other in such a way as to produce a violent disturbance of the latent forces present. From a physical point of view all human action, in so far as it is directed by intelligence, is thus purely miraculous; but what really happens is that a unique event is brought about by a superphysical agency without vitiating the perfect equivalence of the forces involved. By this means results are produced within "nature" for which no "natural" explanation is possible, for apart from human agency no such results would ever eventuate. The most amazing miracles in the Gospel narratives, and the most striking providential events in history, testifying to a special personal act of God, are not a whit more miraculous, however unique and unparalleled their character, than the production of a new chemical substance in a laboratory, or of a new plant in a nursery. Nor would these miracles be less miraculous if the physical *modus operandi* were explained, for they would still be personal acts, specially directed to the revelation of a spiritual truth, or the production of a moral result. The proper criterion of an alleged miracle is thus not whether it is a contravention of physical law, but *whether it fills a true function as a special, personal, revealing, spiritual act.* Its possibility is not in question if its spiritual value is guaranteed. The rest is purely a problem of evidence.

2. What of *prayer as an effective agency* in bringing about events in the objective world?

The recent tendency of thought has been to limit the validity of prayer to the spiritual region, and to deny its effectiveness as an agency in the region of outward happenings. This is one of the results of the tyranny of naturalistic science and of a determinist philosophy, both of which tend to minimise the action of mind on matter, and to cage the will within a strict system of causation. From the standpoint of such a science and of such a philosophy there is no place for free action on the part of man or God, for man is but the sport of the forces that play on and through him, and God is but the principle of which all that is and happens in this fixed and predetermined way is the expression. On such a basis there is no room for prayer except as a self-stimulus on the part of the soul, calling forth its reserves of thought and will on the side of goodness. The influence on religion of this naturalistic attitude is seen in the fast-waning belief in the practice of prayer as a means of affecting the course of events, whether in our own lives or in the world at large.

A consistently theistic view of God's relation to the world speedily and finally disposes of this attitude.

1. For that view implies, in the first place, the existence of God as a personality maintaining an active and intimate relation with human souls as well as with the objective universe. The spiritual world, in other words, is a society, not a mechanism; and being a society it implies the possibility of mutual action and reaction. Now prayer is simply the exercise of the principle of fellowship between man and God in dependence, faith, aspiration, and desire on the one side, in responsive helpfulness and grace on the other. To suggest that there is no possibility of such intercourse is to deny the reality of the moral

order; it is to treat the relations of personalities as though these were mechanical and not spiritual in kind. Just as in human intercourse we interpenetrate and share in one another's lives, lending to and receiving from each other's resources, so in prayer the personal God by our consent shares our inner experience, and we His. Reciprocity is of the essence of personal intercourse.

2. A theistic view of God implies His control of the physical order which is His creation. To deny the efficacy of prayer in modifying the world of events is therefore to deny God's power to govern His world effectively. If I, in response to a friend's request, can change my behaviour, and alter my circumstances and his by my action on the material and social order, how much more can God, who dwells at the heart of things immanently and controls them transcendently, "bring things to pass" in response to my desire and aspiration! There are only two ways in which, so far as we know, God's power is limited. In the first place, He will always act in self-consistency; and secondly, He will sometimes modify His activity in response to the activities of free moral persons for gracious ends. In relation to the material universe *there is nothing impossible* to Him who made it, not even the turning back of a river stream, or the resurrection of the dead. But since He has endowed men with freedom, He cannot in response to any other person's prayer *compel* them to any course of action against their will, however profoundly and subtly He may *influence* them in the direction of His own purposes or of our prayers in their behalf. Safeguarded by this proviso, therefore, intercessory prayer is as legitimate in a world ruled by a personal God as prayer in the interests of one's own soul.

3. All prayer, however, must be offered with due submission to the divine will, and due regard to the interests of the whole world as the theatre of the divine activity. There are some requests which we have a right to make without limitation of any kind—for our natural needs, for spiritual blessings for ourselves and all other souls in peril, for forgiveness and grace, and for the complete fulfilment of the divine purposes on earth. The Lord's prayer is a perfect embodiment of these petitions. We can also see in the place that prayer occupied in our Lord's experience an ideal example of its normal function for all believing souls. The spirit of unfaltering trust, of unbroken confidence, and of complete humility is there in happy balance. The human will is expressed in all its moods of desire and aspiration, the divine is appealed to as all-powerful and all-good ; and while, as we can see in the Gethsemane prayer, there is no hesitancy in making a great request, there is a sense of entire submission to the Father's decision, even though it may run counter to the strong desire of the soul. Jesus prays for Himself, for His friends and followers, and for the whole world. All we know of Him as a man of prayer suggests the repose of a complete trustfulness, combined with an eager spirit of active co-operation with the divine will, which characterises an ideal filial relationship. The problem of prayer would be solved for all men if they exercised its privileges and responsibilities in the spirit of Jesus, and a mighty force would be released for the furtherance of the divine will in the universe at large.

VII

The problem of divine Providence in the individual life, while in one sense it is one of the most urgent,

cannot be adequately dealt with apart from the wider aspects of the subject. It will emerge more than once in dealing with particular problems in our subsequent discussions, especially those of limitation, of suffering, and of moral evil. A few general observations must suffice at this stage. Three suggestive passages from the New Testament may be taken as relevant to our present object.

1. The first assures the right-minded individual that *he is in no danger of being forgotten* in the complex working of the general laws of the universe, and the multiplicity of beings that go to make up the totality of the world-order. Jesus assures us of this truth in one of His most characteristic utterances —" Have no fear of them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: rather fear Him who can destroy both body and soul in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father wills it. The very hairs of your head are all numbered; fear not, then, you are of more value than many sparrows." [1] In these vivid words, our Lord suggests a complete theory of Providence in its relation to the individual. They imply that the natural order is intended to be beneficent in its influence on character, and that it is under the complete control of God as the Heavenly Father. The smallest creatures are objects of divine benevolence. But there are distinctions of value between one order of being and another; it is right therefore to infer that if all that happens to the lower orders of life is according to His loving will, and

[1] Matt. x. 29–31, Moffatt's trans. Dr. Moffatt adds the following note on the last clause of the above quotation: " The πολλῶν of the text is either a corruption of πολλῷ or, as Wellhausen points out, a mistranslation of the Aramaic equivalent for that. The distinction is qualitative, not quantitative."

in furtherance of a beneficent end, how much more surely are the contingencies of experience in case of the highest order sure to be controlled by an even more solicitous exercise of care and love! The veriest details of our physical frame are determined—this is the reassuring teaching of our Lord—in accordance with the will of God, and nothing can happen to His children outside that gracious will,—not even the sorrows and trials of life, though these may include undeserved mishandling, persecution, and murder. A more complete enunciation of the fact that the natural order is normally also a moral order, and that all that can happen in it is within the sovereignty of an all-embracing Holy Love, could not be conceived.

Does this mean that no real evil exists in the world, and that no man can come within reach of its devastating influence? That would be to de-ethicise the world, and to make mere good-nature and not moral righteousness the ultimate law of life. Such a thought would be absolutely opposed to all that was precious in the eyes of Jesus, and to all His teaching and work as Saviour. By no other teacher have the august moral laws of the divine order been more clearly and convincingly revealed; by none other have the awful consequences of the breach of these laws been more powerfully emphasised. But it does mean that all the contingencies of individual human experience are morally beneficent in intention, that no outward happening, however painful and baffling it may seem to human vision, has anything inherently malevolent in it, but is, on the other hand, capable of being used in the highest interests of the soul.

2. The second passage unfolds the further law that, for the individual, *all depends on his reaction to the happenings of the world.* "I," writes St. Paul, speak-

ing of himself as a herald of the Gospel, "live for God as the fragrance of Christ, breathed alike on them that are being saved, and on those that are perishing, to the one a deadly fragrance that makes for death, and to the other a vital fragrance that makes for life." [1] Here the highest good known to man—the Gospel of Christ—as expounded by one of its worthy exponents, has in it terrible as well as glorious possibilities, according to the reception given to it by individual men and women. To those who welcome it, and who live in loyal response to its demands, it is the source of boundless good, of penetrative and uplifting influence, of a sure victory over the "world" and all its contingencies; to those who reject it, the same influence becomes a deadly poison, which only hastens and completes their spiritual decay and putrescence. The Providential order is thus no mere system of good-nature, but a stern and yet beneficent system of moral good; it is meant as a sovereign remedy for all human ills; still, it can benefit only those who openly receive it and worthily use it. And this means, by implication, that all other Providential blessings that come to men are capable of being used in two ways—either for the furthering and perfecting of life, or for the vindication of its own moral constitution in those who disobey it through the terrible consequences that follow its misuse. In the moral world, in other words, we are the arbiters of our own fate; and the universe, and all things in it, provide us with the conditions through which for good or evil we realise our destiny.

3. A third passage in St. Paul's writings further illustrates and justifies this two-sided law of the Providential Order. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, even

[1] 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16 (Moffatt's translation).

to them that are called according to His purpose." [1] This makes explicit and positive what is implicit in the attitude of Jesus ; it presents us with the practical proof of His general exposition. Life, according to the experience of the Apostle, is found to be shot through and through with a divine purpose. That purpose is seen in the " appearing of the sons of God " —the emergence, that is, of a race of spiritual beings for the coming of whom all the previous " travailing and groaning of creation " has been a preparation and a discipline. For those who have reached this spiritual stature (" those who love God," i.e. those who accept life as a divine opportunity of realising the sanctities of Christian character) the whole order of experience works out as a system of pure benevolence. There is nothing that happens, however obnoxious to the feelings and desires of the natural man, that can harm him ; even the " sufferings of the present time " (an experience of which the writer of these words had had ample and convincing proof) " work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." [2] This was the conviction which upheld the Apostle amidst the incessant sorrows and disappointments of his harassed yet triumphant life of service for His Master, which ripened his character into mellowness, and which enabled him to win a sure victory over all the evil forces that beset him on every side. It would be difficult to conceive a lot more outwardly tragic than his ; it would be harder still to find a life in which the evils of life were forced to minister to a more fruitful enrichment of personality. Of only One can it be said that a harder fate was made ministrant

[1] This aspect of the Providential Order is powerfully expressed in Dr. Oman's *The Paradox of the World.*

[2] Rom. viii. 18.

to a finer issue. As already pointed out in another connection, the life of Jesus, so sunny at first, ended outwardly in appalling failure and eclipse. And yet, out of the ghastly evils of His experience—rejected by His countrymen, pursued to death by those in behalf of whom He died, forsaken and denied by His dearest followers, and apparently left to His fate by His Heavenly Father—He wove a seamless garment of perfect holiness for Himself, and turned the stupid malevolence of his enemies into the means of their possible redemption—nay, of the possible redemption of the whole world. Alike in the case of the Master and of His witness, the whole of experience, in its evil and its good, was accepted as part of the moral order, as material for the perfection of personality and for the fulfilment of the divine purpose.

It is only when we thus view the order of Providence as one ideally framed with a view to spiritual ends, that we shall reach the heart of the Christian view of the world, and be able serenely to face the otherwise baffling facts of experience. The old idyllic view of Providence in its relation to the individual life must frankly be surrendered as untenable. God does not "temper the wind to the shorn lamb." He has no favourites of fortune. He is not a God of mere good-nature, anxious to spare His children every pang, and to turn away every rough wind at their request. There are dark bands in the spectrum of experience, but they make the perfect beam when blended into a whole. The promise of the Gospel is not that good men shall be rescued from calamity by Providential intervention, and spared sorrow and anguish in answer to agonising prayers for deliverance, but that the secret of using and mastering every experience as means of good-will be given them. The piety that sees a sign of divine

favour in escape from a sudden danger which destroys other lives is a spurious and egotistic travesty of the faith that knows that " God spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him up for us all." [1] The true Christian will ask for no immunity from the common lot ; for no freedom from the hardships of experience ; for no miraculous deliverances from impending calamity ; but he will ask for the power to overcome the world in a spirit that is courageous as well as meek, militant against all forms of evil while profoundly thankful for what seems good in his life. " This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." [2] It is a victory that is possible only to those who have the spirit that was in Christ ; it is a victory possible to all " that love God "—and to no others. " Faith is not blindness to life's uncertainties and miseries. Until faith in Providence as mere beneficence breaks down, the faith that reconciles us to God in face of every conceivable evil cannot rise. But, then, nothing in the world is omitted from what works together for good." [3]

VIII

In summing up this brief sketch of the Providential Order, we would point out that our underlying assumption implies that the universe throughout is not a static but a dynamic system of reality. To use one of Professor William James's picturesque phrases, it is a " strung along," not a " block " universe. And its movement is not a circular, but a serial or directive movement. It does not return upon itself, repeating its processes in cycles, as Nietzsche and many other philosophers have taught (the eternal *regressus*) ;

[1] Rom. viii. 32. [2] 1 John v. 4.
[3] *The Paradox of the World*, by John Oman, D.D., p. 112.

but fares forth from one " end " to another, each being a fresh starting-point for the attainment of another and a higher (cf. Browning's " other heights in other lives "). True, the Christian ideal of a " Kingdom of God " as the final end of the present order is sometimes expounded as though it represented a static condition of moral equilibrium which when reached would leave no room for further developments. There is, however, nothing in the Christian revelation to justify such a notion. *On the contrary, it may with more truth be represented as the attainment of such a state of moral relationship between God and man, and men with one another, as will make true and unhindered progress for the first time possible.* In this life the proper progress of mankind is hampered by many limitations—some of which are removable, and others absolute—and pre-eminently by the presence of moral evil. And it is only when these hindrances, where modifiable, are conquered and made subservient to the ends of holiness that we shall begin to move on to the ideals of personal perfection and of moral progress, the possibilities of which we shall never exhaust.

Thus the normal relation between the human will and the divine is one of subordination, co-operation, and fellowship in the pursuit of the moral ends for which the world exists. The divine will, being creative and directive, is ideally supreme ; the human, being created and subordinate, is ideally obedient and co-operant. If the relation between the two were already perfect, God's will, once realised by man, would be followed with implicit trust, and the whole resources of the human will would be directed to swell the current of the divine purpose. In actual fact, this is not the case. Man's own nature is in con-

fusion (a " house divided against itself ") ; it is out of harmony with the social ends with which it should co-operate in the larger world, and with the higher ends " to which the whole creation moves." And so this is a world in which there is tension, resistance and rebellion, between man's will and God's. Whether we express this condition as a fall from perfection on the part of mankind, as was done by Christian theologians till the last generation, or as a slow ascent from animality to a realisation of its true moral ends, as is the fashion to-day, the facts are indisputable ; the actual moral world is not an ideal world, but is one of disorder, dislocation, and confusion.

The Christian view of the world represents God as having adapted His providential activity to these conditions. It recognises the human will as a *vera causa*, a centre of spontaneous action operating freely within the larger circle of divine activity. It recognises God as respecting this delegated right of freedom on the part of man even when misused, yet working constantly through the machineries of moral education, and through the more personal energies of His grace, to win mankind to Himself. While thus representing God as adapting Himself to the actual state of the world, the Christian view of Providence never loses hold of the conviction that His ultimate moral sovereignty is unimpaired. This principle is safeguarded in two ways. In the first place, we are encouraged to hope that through the divine ministries of persuasion and training, mankind as a whole will ultimately be won over to His obedience ; and, in the second, it gives us confidence that the power of Holy Love, though it may conceivably fail to win all men over to its side, is yet able to use even the failure and sin of the impenitent for general moral ends. When

men refuse to rise to their true destiny as children of God, they may still be used as means, however unwilling, to the furtherance of the larger purpose of their Maker. A spiritual reading of history, as we have seen, reinforces this conviction in a convincing way. We there find abundant evidence that behind, beneath, and above the individual ends of men and nations, however good or evil, which they may or may not attain according to the circumstances of the moment, there is a stream of moral tendency which flows on unhindered and inevitable, at once justifying the vaticinations of the moral sense, and renewing the faith that righteousness rules at the heart of things.

The Christian view of the world is thus at once *evolutionary and redemptive in character*. Ideally and actually it represents the world as moving upward through experiment, failure and partial attainments, into a more and more ordered condition, on the way to the perfect fulfilment of a divine purpose. *This is its evolutionary aspect.* On the other hand, the condition of the world, afflicted as it is through and through with the consequences of moral evil, has necessitated the personal revelation and activity of God in history whereby His loving energies have been manifested for the rescue of humanity from the power and judgment of its sinful ways. This process was mediated specially through the Hebrew people, and found its consummation in the advent and work of Jesus Christ, who " brought life and immortality to light through His Gospel," and in whose salvation all the world is invited to share. *This is the redemptive aspect of God's Providential Order.*

When the normal relation between the divine will and the human is realised, then for the first time will man's true function in the Providential Order be

fully realised. This was indicated of old by the ancient seer who represents God as saying to man when newly created—" Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and *subdue* it." [1] He is meant to be the lord of creation, the vicegerent of the Most High, set in rulership over the lower orders of matter and life, that out of the natural may emerge the spiritual, and all things be used for the development and perfection of an ideal moral society. So far he has not—at least in a sustained and loyal manner—used such control as his faculties have enabled him to win, for the right purposes ; for these can never be attained so long as man works for his own ends, and apart from the larger ends of God's holy will. Thus, history is a story of partial and recurrent failure rather than of steady and unbroken attainment, and man is still burdened and hampered in his upward march. But the end is not yet. The world is being slowly disciplined, as much through its failures and calamities, as through its partial victories, into a better way. In the great world-war of 1914 we see what terrible possibilities of evil lie in man's conquest of Nature when used for selfish personal and racial purposes. If the lessons of that war are learnt by civilised man, and a true revival of religion is born out of this tragic experience, the greatest calamity that has befallen mankind may lead to the discovery of one of the elementary principles of the spiritual life, that only as man uses all his gifts and powers and opportunities in obedience to the will of God will his control over the physical forces and living creatures around him become a beneficent gift, and enable him to realise the end for which he was created—the founding of a Kingdom of God on earth.

[1] Gen. i. 28.

BOOK II

THE PROBLEM OF PURPOSE

CHAPTER I

SOME CRITICAL OBJECTIONS

"WHERE? WHEN? WHY? WHITHER?—these are the great questions to which man has ever been seeking an answer, from philosophy, from science, from theology; and the greatest of these is WHITHER?—to which theology alone can give the answer."

THERE are three crucial questions that must be faced before we can arrive at anything like a constructive theory of Providence. The first is the question of Origin, the second is that of Order, and the third is that of Purpose. The first may be understood in two senses: whether the present universe is eternal, or has had a temporal beginning; or, whether the universe as we know it is constituted by matter or by spirit as its originative principle. The second deals with the problem whether the seeming orderliness of the universe is a projection of the human mind, having no objective order to correspond to it. The third is whether the apparent purposiveness of the stream of cosmic forces is real, or an illusion. Our main object in the present chapter is with the third of these questions; but a few words on the first two are desirable in order that we may approach the third with satisfaction.

I

Ignoring ancient speculations regarding the supposed eternity of the universe as based on purely theoretic

assumptions, and limiting ourselves to the position of physical science at the present moment on this question, we cannot say that any determinate answer is to hand. The evidence of astronomy presents us with an innumerable host of starry systems in various stages of evolution and decay; some in a condition of fiery energy, being still in a highly gaseous state; others (like our own) midway between incandescence and total solidity; others whose energy has apparently dwindled down into inertness and passivity—"dead" planets circling round "dead" suns. We can only speak with some amount of confidence of our own planetary system, which seems to be a miniature of the whole in that it includes planets in all stages of physical change; some still "young," in the sense that they are in a gaseous state; others, like our own, in mid-career, composed of matter in gaseous, liquid, and solid forms; others, like our moon, already devoid of atmosphere and water, sunk into a purely solid and immeasurably cold and lustreless condition. Speaking generally, it would appear that the material universe is slowly but steadily losing its available energy into space; but whether there is some principle of compensation or recovery inherent in the nature of things does not yet appear. If such a principle were discovered by physicists it would tend to the conclusion that the material universe is eternal; if not, we are led to the conclusion that matter is not self-sustaining, but is dependent on some higher principle of rejuvenation which may come into action periodically, and so give it a fresh era of vigour and reintegration. And there the question must be left so far as the present argument is concerned.

More ultimate, and more important for our purpose

is the first meaning of the word Origin—whether, that is, we are to conceive of Matter as the ultimate fact in our conception of reality, or as secondary to Spirit as the creative principle. The crass materialism of a generation ago, which viewed mind as a mere epiphenomenon of matter, having no distinctive existence except in association with certain highly organised forms, has now few representatives, and these are chiefly in the ranks of the "behaviourist" psychologists, some of whom profess to be able to account for human as well as animal behaviour with little or no reference to conscious states. This point of view, however, is demonstrably the result of an act of abstraction; it leaves out the observer, and dichotomises experience into two disconnected halves. As it has been well observed, "The physical world as conceived by science is a very useful abstraction from but only a partial representation *of what we perceive.* It can never form the basis of psychology, since it is itself based on psychology." The very constitution of matter implies a spiritual element; it is always something that exists for spirit and cannot even be thought of out of relation to a perceiving mind, since it is only given to us to know it as part of our mental experience. If this is true of finite spirits like our own, we are obliged to think of matter as an entity as related in some such way to a universal Spirit. Once this is clearly grasped, it is a matter of speculative indifference whether we consider the present universe as one of a series, each formed out of the debris of a previous one, or as eternally one and the same, in spite of all the internal changes and sequence of events which characterise it to our observation. Whether there be one, or a series of many universes, each and every universe must find its ultimate ground

in spiritual reality, which is the all-important consideration.[1]

II

We pass to the second problem just enumerated—that of Order. This is a wider question than that of Purpose, and must be dealt with before that can be profitably handled.

What right have we to assume that Nature is really orderly throughout—that her infinitely varied and complex phenomena make a single "system"—that there is a universe at all, and not a *multi*verse? When all is said and done, says the radical Pyrrhonist (or universal doubter) our view of things is purely *conceptual*, a scheme of ideas to which objective "facts" seem to correspond, but we have no guarantee that this correspondence is real and not illusory. It has been pointed out also that even if the so-called universe were the result of pure "chance," it would (at least here and there) fall into a kind of quasi-order; and there have been thinkers even in modern times who boldly affirm that the world is constituted neither by intelligence nor by necessity, but by pure fortuity, lit up here and there by a false glow of

[1] "Psychological experience does not directly reveal a mere physical world such as is described by physical science, but a world ordered and unified by interests. The world of physical science is an abstraction from that of psychological experience; and a self distinguished from such a physical world is a similar abstraction. . . . Throughout our perceptions and actions, interests are present. We do not perceive or act upon what is of no interest or value. It is a world of both spatial and temporal unity that psychological observation reveals to us; and this is just what is implied when we say that it is spiritual and not merely physical existence that is revealed by psychological experience" (*Psychology and the Sciences*, edited by William Brown, M D., D.Sc. (Introductory Lecture by J. S. Haldane on "Psychology and Biology").

rational order.[1] We mention this, indeed, only to dismiss it as mere wantonness of thought, for chance in the sense of an uncaused phenomenon is something of which we have no experience. In common speech this word is used of such events as are the result of causes too subtle or complex to be understood; in scientific parlance it can only mean coincidences or collocations of parallel events (each independently caused) which seem to have no cross-links of connection. In both cases it is a name for human ignorance; and no argument can be built up on premises based on ignorance.

It is quite true that the idea of an absolute or even of a relative order of Nature is based on an act of faith. But it is faith based on sufficient evidence to give it initial plausibility. Science is built on the fact that in certain directions we do find an element of order in the collocation and sequence of events; and having found this to be so in certain ranges of experience, we leap, *by an act of faith*, to the tentative conclusion that this order extends beyond our immedi-

[1] Nietzsche, expressing here as elsewhere the ultimate revolt against Theism, has a remarkable passage in *Before Sunrise*, in which he gives expression to this absolute nihilism of thought. "Von Ungefähr" (by chance), he says—"that is the oldest title to nobility in the world, and I restore it to all things. I redeem them from their enslavement to things. This freedom of heavenly certainty I set like an azure bell over all things, when I taught that over them and in them there is no 'eternal will' that wills . . . when I taught that one thing at least is impossible—rationality. A little reason, doubtless, a seed of wisdom, scattered from star to star . . . this leaven is mingled with all things; for folly's sake, wisdom is mingled with all things . . . but this I find in all things, that they are more inclined to dance at the feet of Chance. O heaven above me, pure and lofty: that is now to me thought purified—that there is no eternal Reason-Spider and Spider's-Net: that thou art a dancing-floor for Divine Chances, a table of the Gods for godlike dice and dicers."

ate experience into the world at large, and that, if we pursue our investigations into the unknown by right methods and in right directions, we shall be justified by the issue. And along definite lines of inquiry, which experience has shown to be valid, this is exactly what takes place. It is true that we have often to correct our interpretations of Nature, but this only proves the imperfection of our methods of inquiry, not the irrationality of the world. All that we do *know* of the physical universe constantly reinforces the faith that wherever the human mind sends out its tentacles of inquiry, it will find the same sentinels of order keeping watch and ward over the new facts that come within the range of our observation. The spectrum reveals the same chemistry ruling the atoms and molecules of the farthest visible stars as characterises the substances which we see and handle here on earth ; the same laws of motion mark their rhythmic movements as are found in the pathways of the planets ; the same light throbs in their immemorial rays as in the sunbeam that falls on the eyes of a slumbering child. There is no reason whatever to doubt that in the vast spaces above as well as in the region of the infinitely little which unfolds its secrets under the microscope, the same unsleeping laws of harmony prevail. The obstinate, glorious faith that this harmony is universal is the very life-pulse of scientific inquiry ; it is the one motive that keeps the investigator of the mysteries of Nature patient and persistent in his endeavours to carry the " banner of order a furlong further into chaos," sure that if only his methods of inquiry are right, and his spirit unconquerable, he will succeed in his quest. Indeed, banish the notion that order prevails everywhere and always in the universe, then the nerve of scientific thought is

cut at its centre, and the mind of man as an instrument of scientific inquiry is visited with permanent paralysis. Such an idea would subvert the very belief that there is a universe at all, and banish the beautiful word "cosmos" from the vocabulary of man.

This does not mean that there is any finality about our conceptions of Nature. Science is ever progressive; the *observed* order is perpetually being corrected as well as enlarged by better knowledge of the *actual* order of which it is the imperfect but ever-approximating image. Such relations as we discover among its facts must be there, for they lend themselves to our handling with obedient faithfulness; and there are other relations, which we do not perceive, or which we consciously ignore, because they have no present interest for us. And if it be objected that the ends of what we call science are subjective, "the miracle of miracles, a miracle not yet cleared up by any philosophy, is that the given order lends itself to our remodelling. It shows itself plastic to many of our scientific, to many of our æsthetic, to many of our practical purposes."[1] In other words, the orderly action of the human mind finds a certain corroboration in the order of the world; there is something objective *there* which corresponds to our subjective handling *here*. And the whole history of scientific thought proves that the more we subordinate our subjective tendencies to the correction of facts, the more surely do we find ourselves in deepening correspondence with objective reality; and the more readily do its forces and facts lend themselves to our purpose.[2]

[1] William James, *The Will to Believe* (Essay on "Reflex Action and Theism," v, pp. 118–20).

[2] The essential rationality of the universe—a rationality which we do not import into Nature, but which we progressively discover

The stubborn faith of science that there is a real order of Nature if we can but discover it, and that every fact has its place in that order, is well expressed by Sigwart in his *Logic*, as quoted by James in the essay on "Reflex Action and Theism": "No amount of failure in the attempt to subject the world of sensible experience to a thorough-going system of conceptions, and to bring all

in Nature as our own ideas come more and more in accord with her facts and their inherent laws of co-ordination and sequence, is sometimes dramatically illustrated in the history of science. The simultaneous discovery of the planet Neptune by Adams and Leverrier, through watching the perturbations of the planet Uranus in its orbit, and deducing therefrom the existence of a disturbing body outside that orbit, is familiar enough; but still more wonderful instances are on record. When Mendeleef formulated the "fundamental law of the mystery of matter" which states that "the properties of an element are a periodic function of its atomic weight" so that "if you know the weight of the atom of an element, you may know, if you like, its properties, for they are fixed," he gave a remarkable illustration of his own law. He found it "necessary in order to make his table of elements true, to have three spaces vacant for *undiscovered elements*, and, not content with this, he proceeded in 1871, on the basis of this law, to predict the properties which these elements should possess when discovered"; which he did "with extreme minuteness." And then, suddenly, "out of the night of the unknown," one after another of these elements with their identical properties as predicted—"came to meet him—one out of the hills of Scandinavia; another from the Pyrenees of France, and a third out of the mines of Germany" (*The New Knowledge*, pp. 22, 24). It would be difficult to imagine a more signal instance of the way in which science holds the mirror up to Nature, proving at once the rationality of both Nature and man, and the identity of the reason immanent in both. As Principal Caird puts it, "If Nature were a mere chaos, without law or order or intelligible constitution, knowledge would be impossible, thought could find nothing in the outward world to grasp. But it is because law, order, and sequence, in one word because reason exists in Nature, that Nature yields itself up to thought and intelligence "so that throughout the whole realm of Nature there is nothing irrational or unintelligible" (*Introd. to the Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 238, 240).

happenings back to cases of immutable law, is able to shake our faith in the rightness of our principles. We hold fast to our demand that even the greatest apparent confusion must sooner or later solve itself in transparent formulas. We begin to work ever afresh ; and refusing to believe that Nature will permanently withhold the reward of our exertions, think rather that we have hitherto only failed to push them in the right direction. And all this pertinacity flows from a conviction that we have no right to renounce the fulfilment of our quest. What, in short, sustains the courage of investigators is the force of the obligation of an ethical idea." [1] In other words, faith in a universal Order proves itself at bottom one with the principle of spiritual faith in the orderliness and beneficence of the Divine Mind, whose workings the religious thinker believes to be revealed in the

[1] *Logic*, ii, p. 23 (quoted in William James's *Will to Believe*, footnote, p. 120). James goes on pertinently to remark, " This is a true account of the spirit of science. Does it essentially differ from the spirit of religion ? And is anyone entitled to say in advance that while the one form of faith shall be crowned with success, the other is certainly doomed to fail ? " . . . It is interesting to find that so thorough-going a scientist as Professor Huxley [who once wrote such words as these : " Scientific men get an awkward habit—no, I won't call it that, for it is a valuable habit—of believing nothing unless there is evidence for it, and they have a way of looking upon belief which is not based on evidence not only as illogical but immoral " (*Science and Hebrew Tradition*, p. 65)] is also obliged, when face to face with ultimate issues, to confess : " If there is anything in the world I do firmly believe in, it is the universality of the law of causation ; but that universality cannot be proved by any amount of experience " (*Controversy with W. S. Lilley*) ; and he confesses : " It is quite true that the ground of every one of our actions, and the validity of all our reasonings, *rest on a great act of faith*, which leads us to take the experience of the past as a safe guide in our dealings with the present and the future " (*Science and the Christian Tradition*, p. 243).

operations and laws of Nature.[1] Thus all search for an objective order in Nature, as well as for final causes, is ultimately a search for God.

III

It is useless, however, to affirm that the whole interest which man finds in Nature is satisfied by the satisfaction of the idea of Order. He is a "willing" as well as a thinking being; he views the universe not merely as an abstract thinker, but as an active being whose activity is essentially purposeful. Further, the more closely he observes phenomena, the more deeply is the impression brought home to him that it is not merely a system of relations, but a theatre of directive energy. And if the static aspect of the universe at any given moment resolves itself into a system of ordered relations, its dynamic aspect forces him to ask whether there is not something in it corresponding to the fact of purpose in himself. If the mind is privileged to find a meaning in the correlations of matter and events, may he not legitimately ask if there is none in the (at least quasi-) dramatic movements of the physical and organic world? To deny this is to find ourselves thrown back and baffled just when our exploring impulse is approaching its final satisfaction; it would be to make Nature alien to man just in his most distinctively human characteristic. If feeling and will are "essentially teleological," and the processes of conscious life are as a matter of fact only intelligible with reference to the ends in which they

[1] Professor T. H. Green, in his *Prolegomena to Ethics*, points out that "the very thought of Nature as a related whole involves some principle which renders all relations possible, and is itself determined by none of them." What is an axiom for philosophy, is a postulate for theology.

culminate, how shall man find himself in harmony with Nature, and Nature with him, if in this matter there is no point of happy contact between them? It is thus no wonder that the unsophisticated mind feels a shock of disquietude when its intuitive belief in the purposefulness of Nature is branded as a mere illusion. "How then has it come about," we ask, "that the scientific mind wages war upon this strong universal instinct, and that while passionately pursuing the search for order in the broad fields of nature, it cries instant halt to the search for her hidden purpose, nay, bars out the search as an irrelevancy?"

The answer to this question is complicated by the fact that the term "evolution," while one of the commonest in modern literature, is used in at least three different senses, moving along diverse planes of thought, and representing distinctive theories of Reality. It will be necessary for us to distinguish carefully between these meanings, before we can deal satisfactorily with the problem of Teleology. They may be called the Idealistic, the Naturalistic, and the Epigenetic conceptions of evolution.

1. The Idealistic or philosophical idea of evolution is the fruit of the speculative impulse given to European thought in the systems of Hegel and Schelling. This views the world as the objectification of a Divine Idea realised progressively in history, the working out of an Immanent Reason, which controls and gives meaning to the contents of experience. Here the *end* determines the *means*; the future controls the past and the present; the *causæ efficientes* of events and processes are subservient to the *causæ finales* which give the universe its significance. So far all is "teleological," but it is none the less a necessary process,

and as such fixed and determined from the beginning; as William James says, we are in a "block" universe which is only the "reverse side of a mechanism." The idea of purpose as a chosen alternative (an essential part of its meaning in any ethical sense) in no way applies to such a universe. A predetermined end in the sense that nothing can be conceived as an alternative to it, in whole or in part, is only a quasi-end, and loses that free spontaneous aspect which is part of its ethical and religious value.

2. The Naturalistic view of evolution, on the other hand, moves in a system of mechanical ideas, in which the course of events is dealt with as determined, not by the future, but by the past. The present and future, according to this conception, were implicit in the "star-mist" out of which the universe was evolved. This view of Reality implies that even the highest facts of experience are only transmuted forms of a Primal Energy which is envisaged as more akin to matter than to mind. The amount of energy in the universe being *ex hypothesi* fixed and unalterable, the *logical necessity* which is the regulative notion in the Idealistic form of evolution is now supplanted by the idea of *mechanistic necessity*. Evolution is conceived of as the unfolding of the implicit factors of the universe into explicit form; the undifferentiated unity of the far beginning of things is broken up into the multiplicity of phenomena as known to us, and moves on inevitably to the future according to no preconceived plan, and with no conception of any "final end" to which the whole process is subordinated. In such a system of thought there is manifestly no place for a real teleology.

3. The third or Epigenetic view of evolution is that Reality is not a fixed quantity, determined by either

the far past or the distant future, but a creative process, which means in effect that the present is something more than the child of the past, and something less than the parent of the future. According to the first and second view of the world, there are never any fresh factors, but only the unfolding of the implicit content of the fact of the past, or previsions of those of the future; we can see nothing but "germ within germ" as we look back in ever smaller miniature, "after the fashion of a juggler's box,"[1] and nothing but organism beyond organism evolving the hidden contents of these germs as we peer into the future.[2] The epigenetic theory of evolution substitutes for this static view of Reality a dynamic conception of it as of something growing ever fuller and richer with each change of form. This distinction corresponds in older phraseology with that between *natura naturata* in which all at root is *recapitulation* (or "*palingenesis*" as Haeckel calls it)—an eternal routine or repetition under infinitely diverse guises; and *natura naturans*, in which all is *history*, a process of experiment, adventure, and ultimate achievement,[3] where the lower leads to the higher, and the good to

[1] Geddes and Thomson, *The Evolution of Sex*, p. 84.

[2] Both the Idealistic and the Naturalistic theories of evolution conform to Hegel's notion of evolution in his *Encyclopædie* (1. § 161). "The movement of the notion is development; by which that only is explicitly affirmed which is already itself present." As Ward puts it, "the development of an organism" [and of the "world organism," it might be added] "was for Hegel the counterpart of this logical development, and he recommends the so-called 'box-within-box' hypothesis of Leibnitz and Bonnet for 'perceiving that in the process of development the notion keeps to itself, and only gives rise to alteration of form, without making any addition in point of content'" (*Realm of Ends*, p. 100). This in effect is the denial of Kant's synthetic judgment and has had a wide and disastrous influence on philosophic thought.

[3] See Ward's *Realm of Ends*, p. 99, etc.

the better. The Naturalistic view of evolution is symbolised by the lines :

> " With earth's first clay they did the last man knead,
> And then of the last harvest sowed the seed :
> On the first morning of creation wrote
> What the last dawn of reckoning shall read." [1]

The Epigenetic is suggested by Tennyson's lines in *Locksley Hall :*

> " But I doubt not through the ages an increasing purpose runs ;
> And the thoughts of men are ripened by the process of the suns."

Professor Ward suggests that while the two former theories conform to the monistic or " block " theory of the universe, the latter is compatible with a pluralistic standpoint.[2] We may add that it is equally compatible with a theistic position and as such leaves us with ample room for the fact of teleology, not only as describing human conduct, but also the divinely-led movement of the universe as a whole. Such a theory of evolution is, in the opinion of the writer, the only one that adequately explains the facts, even from a scientific point of view, and it is the only one that provides room for the Christian conception of God as personal, and for the Christian doctrine of man, and of the worth of existence.

IV

We pass now to a consideration of some of the historic criticisms which have been urged against a teleological view of the universe.

Some Idealistic philosophers, from Kant onwards, have stigmatised the idea of purpose as being too anthropomorphic to be attributed to the divine method

[1] Omar Khayyám. [2] Op. cit., p. 99.

of action; have urged that such a conception is scarcely worthy of the eternal Spirit, who should not be spoken of after the analogy of such creatures as we are; and that even if such an idea were partially applicable to His ordering of events, it would be in a sense very different from that used of the purposive acts of man.

For instance, does not the idea of purposive action suggest that one is acting on material outside himself, as when a carpenter makes a table out of wood provided for him, whose properties he manipulates for his own subjective ends? Again, does not the very notion of purpose suggest difficulties which have to be overcome by the exercise of a certain ingenuity and foresight, and can there be any difficulties for God who has created the material on which He works? Would not such difficulties be unreal because self-made? Further, the idea of purpose suggests that of a choice between two or more alternatives, both as to means and ends, and can there be any choice for Him who can follow but one line of action as the wisest and best at each moment? And finally, as Spinoza claims must be the case, the idea of purpose suggests a *need* in the mind of the purposer which calls for satisfaction—a notion clearly inconsistent with the conception of a God who *ex hypothesi* is the centre of everlasting fullness and self-sufficiency.

We may say in passing that both Kant and Spinoza, in urging such objections to the notion of purpose in creation, were dealing with a situation in religious philosophy created by Deism, and that their objections were directed against a conception of the relation of God to the universe that is held by hardly anyone to-day. There are, however, certain aspects of these objections that may well occupy our attention for

a little while, since they enable us to clear away certain misconceptions that still remain.

1. To turn to the first objection: we must not press too far the analogy of the concept of purpose in the case of imperfect creatures like ourselves as though the same limitations apply to the manner in which God conceives and achieves His purposes. The essence of a purposeful act may be the same in Creator and created, yet there may (indeed must) be great differences in the way in which it is conceived and carried out. We claim that the *sense of difficulty*, for instance, which so often characterises our efforts to attain our ends is no essential part of the concept of even a human purpose. The necessary elements of a purposeful act are, first, the conception of an end in view, and secondly, the arrangement of means so as to bring about that end in an harmonious way. The end is attained sometimes with ease, sometimes with difficulty, but the result is not necessarily affected by the question whether it was difficult or easy. The final judgment rests rather on the value of the end gained, and on the skill and wisdom shown in its accomplishment. The achievement of purposeful ends in creation from this point of view may serve as an impressive evidence of the divine character, and it is from this side alone that the argument from design is of religious value.

2. Again, as to the objection that purpose implies a choice of alternatives. This is only another way of positing the attribute of freedom as part of the divine nature. This attribute is involved in the very idea of a created universe. Unless it be argued that there can be only one kind of universe—a position with which our knowledge of the present order in no way harmonises—then the choice of this particular uni-

verse out of all possible universes must have involved an inconceivably minute choice between alternative possibilities. It is surely a higher conception of the Creator that the actual universe is the result of such free forethought on His part, than that He was conditioned automatically either by some necessity within His own nature, or by a supposed constraint outside Himself. And if for mankind the exercise of foresight and adjustment of means to ends in this actual universe often involves painful perplexity and uncertainty, this again is the result of our own finitude in a world where we have to grope half blindly for the best way of achieving our ends, and would in no wise apply to a Creator who knows all the possibilities from the beginning, and whose choice between " this and that " was not between an easier and a harder way of accomplishing His will, but a more perfect in preference to a less perfect way of doing so. The only problem for the Divine Being—if such a phrase be permissible—would be to determine which alternative was most consistent with the end in view, and with His own character, and in the determination of this, there would be no such thing as a " difficulty " in the human sense of the word. We must remember also that " there is the clearest distinction between alternatives offered to us by a world that already exists and is external to ourselves, and alternatives that exist before a world is called into being, and that are governed, not by the nature of an external material, but by the character and purpose of Him who calls it into being." [1] The conditions therefore under which the divine purpose has been pursued are very different from those which condition human purposes.

3. The objection that the idea of purpose involves

[1] *The Christian Religion*, by J. Scott Lidgett, M.A., p. 384.

a " need " in the mind of the purposer, and that this is an idea impossible to associate with the Divine Being, gains its plausibility only owing to the ambiguity of the word " need " as here used. The suppressed premise in this argument is that every sense of need must imply an imperfection. True, our human sense of need usually results largely from our lack of resources, but it is by no means so always, even with ourselves, especially in the higher ranges of our being. For instance, it is of the very nature of love, not only that it looks for benefits, but that it longs to bestow them, and the purer the love the deeper is its " sense of need " for an object on which to expend itself. And if love is the central attribute of the Divine Being, He must desire an object other than Himself upon which to expend His love. If therefore the world and all it contains is in a deep sense the expression of the creative love of God, it is no misuse of language to suggest that in so doing He was satisfying an inherent need of His nature. It is a part of the very perfection of God that He should thus be in a true sense dependent on the creation which is the outcome of His love, and that He should include among His creatures beings capable of freely responding to it, and of entering into reciprocal relations of conscious fellowship with Himself. A passionless God finding in His own inherent nature the satisfaction of all His needs, and ever returning upon Himself in eternal self-sufficiency, is not the God revealed in Jesus Christ, but a fiction of the philosophers. Such a nature would be beneath man in the wealth of His moral and spiritual qualities ; for the noblest men are those who find their richest joy in expending the best that is in them on those less highly endowed than themselves. The most perfect expression of the nature of

God is found in the words " God so loved the world that He *gave* His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life " (John iii. 16).

V

We can now proceed to deal with the scientific criticisms directed against the idea of Purpose as such in its application to the dynamic aspects of the World-Order.

It is unquestionably true that for the ends of pure physical science the category of purpose is not only unnecessary but obstructive. For physical science is out for a mechanical handling of its material; it has nothing to do with a full and ultimate explanation of phenomena. " Rigidly scientific investigation finds mechanical determination everywhere, and purposive spontaneity nowhere, *just because it has previously resolved that it will accept mechanical explanation and nothing else in answer to its questions.* So far as we bear in mind the presence of these self-imposed limitations throughout, our mechanical science need lead to no illusion, or no deception. The success of our mechanical postulates shows that, within the sphere of their logical applicability, the course of the world does really conform to them, and thus the results won by their application are genuine truth, so far as they go." [1] In other words, " it is only when we forget the limits set to the logical applicability of the mechanical postulates, by the special interests they subserve, and proceed to treat them as logically indispensable conditions of all existence and all knowledge, that the truths of mechanical science are

[1] Taylor's *Metaphysics*, p. 293 (italics ours).

perverted into the illusions and falsehoods of mechanical philosophy." [1] So far, that is, as life is based on mechanical (physical) conditions, these conditions must be dealt with as such without reference to any higher categories; it is only when these categories are taken as completely explanatory of the facts of life and mind that the physicist leaves his proper function, and falls into error.

The inference drawn by Naturalistic scientists that because the law of mechanical causation is invariable and universal throughout the physical universe, the postulate of a purposeful Mind guiding the affairs of the world is rendered otiose only needs to be envisaged for a moment to be seen in its true light. Let us take Professor Karl Pearson's well-known illustration as our guide. "Suppose," he says," I were to put a stone on a piece of flat ground, and walked round it in that particular curve, termed an ellipse, which a planet describes round the sun . . . my motion might be very fairly described by the law of gravitation; but it is quite clear that no force from the stone to me, no law of gravitation could be logically said to be the cause of my movement"—which would really be the outcome of a carefully adjusted act of will. Indeed "if every particle of matter were inhabited by a fairy, whose voluntary movements were in exact accordance with the ends of an all-wise and purposeful mind, everything would take place just as though those particles were moved by a blind but orderly necessity." Another illustration will make this still more clear. Let us imagine that we were watching the movement of a complicated automatic machine which never stopped or broke down, but that we were ignorant of the fact that it had been designed by an intelligent

[1] Taylor's *Metaphysics*, p. 293.

inventor; then the more perfect the foresight and skill of the inventor, the less would his initial action be suspected by us. Now the natural world is just such a machine, and it is possible, by restricting our recognition of its nature to its mechanical properties, to account for its movements without bringing the Creator into view at all. Manifestly, however, this would not fully account for the world, any more than the mechanical forces utilised in the work of the machine would account for the machine itself. The *existence* of the machine itself would still have to be explained; and this could not be done without positing the prior existence of an inventor, who had so arranged the parts of the machine as to realise his purposeful intention in constructing it. A perfect mechanical explanation of the physical world is thus entirely compatible with a teleological explanation of its movements in time; nay, for a complete theory of its nature it requires both lines of approach. The *causæ efficientes* of the scientist are simply the mechanical means of realising the *causæ finales* of the teleologist. Without the former the latter would have no material for his purpose; without the latter the former can only provide us with an incomplete and unsatisfying explanation of the world as we know it.

VI

It still remains for us to indicate why the mechanistic view of life fails to satisfy the conditions.

Life is always manifested in an organism. This organism is a more or less complicated assemblage of parts built up of "inorganic" matter each having a "function" or part to play in the functioning of the whole organism. The whole is a self-integrating and

self-maintaining entity or individual, whose *differentia* is that it is a *living* being. From one aspect it is possible to deal with each part (and with the whole as composed of distinct parts) from the purely mechanistic point of view. Every living being is composed of various kinds of matter, having chemico-physical properties constantly reacting on one another. Bones, muscles, ligaments, nervous tissues, blood, glandular and other fluids are all material substances having material qualities, and obeying material laws; they can be weighed, measured, and chemically analysed like other forms of matter. Speaking physically, the body is a machine composed of a large number of secondary machines, and we can deal with them as such. Speaking chemically, we can follow the reactions of the substances composing these machines with equal propriety and completeness. But when we have done this, have we even begun to account for the living being? There is something more in the body than physical parts and chemical reactions. There is a life-principle at work. This life-principle controls, directs and co-ordinates the parts and their functions with a view to the maintenance and the welfare of the whole. No mechanistic laws can account for this co-ordinating process; it cannot account for the facts of nourishment, digestion, waste, and repair; nor for the way in which the various functions of the organs are made to contribute to the growth, maturity, and decay of the organism. In other words, *there is a synthetic power at work, which acts teleologically*. Each organ exists for its function; and each function acts for an end, and has no meaning apart from the end which it subserves; and that end is always a contribution towards the ends of life as a whole. Not till we begin to use teleological categories do we begin to

understand the organism as such, much less the individual organs and their functions ; then we come to realise what they are and why they have come into being. Without understanding how life works, we are everywhere met with the fact that it acts purposefully within the organism. But life is greater than the particular organism ; and it has therefore endowed the organism with the power to reproduce itself. In so doing, and still using the mechanical and chemical qualities of matter, it produces a series of new organisms, endowing each with hereditary qualities that pass on from one generation to another in a cumulative yet infinitely varied fashion, the stronger and more efficient individuals surviving through the action of " natural selection," to hand on their dominant features to their descendants, thus ensuring a gradual upward evolutionary movement on the whole.

Biologically therefore we are in a different world from that of the physicist (just as psychologically we are in a different world from that of the biologist), and the categories of the physicist are totally incapable of accounting for the facts of the biologist. It is only by abstracting from the data of the biologist that the physicist is able to deal fruitfully with his material. It is only by adding to the data of the physicist those peculiar to life as such that the biologist is able to begin his function ; and for these he needs new categories with which to work. And these categories are best described as teleological in nature.

CHAPTER II

DYSTELEOLOGY

"*You* see a world that wildly whirls
Through coiling clouds and battle smoke,
And drenched with blood the children's curls
And women's hearts by thousands broke.
I see a host above it all,
Where angels wield their conquering sword;
And thrones may rise, and thrones may fall,
But comes the Kingdom of the Lord."

ALFRED NORRIS.

WE have now considered the chief theoretical or *a priori* objections raised against the idea that Nature works purposefully as well as mechanically, and have laid down the main lines along which that purpose appears to work. There is, however, a large class of objections which have been brought forward from the empirical point of view, i.e. from observations made of certain actual facts of the physical order and of organic life, which seem to conflict with that theory. These have been urged from various quarters with great skill and persistence during recent years, with a view to discredit the theistic view of the cosmos, and the reality of the Providential Order; and though we have in a measure anticipated the answer, it will be necessary to devote closer attention to this side of the question before we pass on. This is all the more necessary because the facts marshalled under this

head are numerous enough, and perplexing enough, to make a deep impression on the imagination, and, it is often urged, to put a severe strain upon the faith of many, both as to the purpose and goodness of God.

These objections may be conveniently ranged under two headings—those on the one side that deal with alleged imperfections in Nature, such as " maladjustments " or " blank spaces " in the physical environment, " malformations " in organic life, " useless " or half-aborted or insufficiently developed organs, and such-like facts—all of which suggest a poverty of resource or a clumsiness of method, or a lack of clear direction, in the cosmic purpose ; and those, on the other hand, which arise from too prodigal a use of the resources at hand, which involve an immense " wastefulness " in Nature, so that the end does not appear to justify the vast expenditure of effort and material. To these may be added a third class of objections, raised not against the purposefulness of the world, but against the benevolence of its Maker, whose purpose—in so far as it does realise itself—appears to be attained at the expense of untold and needless suffering, both among animals and men. This last line of attack will be postponed for treatment to the next section, to which it properly belongs.

One preliminary word is needed before we deal in such detail as our plan permits with these objections. They are relevant only on the theory that each particular fact in the cosmic order perfectly expresses His will and intention. This, as we have already seen, is an assumption which we are by no means bound to make on theistic grounds, but we will waive that point till we have looked at the facts themselves, promising, in the meantime, to deal with the assumption itself later on.

I

We begin, then, with the objections raised to the idea of the purposefulness and wisdom of God as displayed in the actual facts and arrangements of the world.

Philosophers have been fond, ever since the time of Lucretius,[1] of reconstructing the universe on their own plan, and of pointing out how the actual condition of things is different from what would have been the case had they themselves had a hand in the creative process. The Epicureans and Stoics eagerly disputed whether the world were made well or ill, the former mainly taking a negative attitude, as against the latter. In modern times, Laplace, Comte, John Stuart Mill, J. J. Murphy, Lange (the historian of materialism), and others have written scathing diatribes against the clumsiness and maladjustments to be found in creation. Lucretius was very severe on the physical conditions that make one zone torrid and another frigid, on the extent of barren heaths, and rocks and sands and seas, on the prevalence of unseasonable weather, storms and droughts, and on the abundance of poisonous plants and destructive animals—as evidences that the earth is faulty and ill-made, and could not be the work of a Divine Intelligence.[2] Comte and Laplace said that, by a slight change in the plane of the ecliptic, the fertility and climate of the earth as a whole would have been very much improved; and that if the moon had been so placed as to revolve round the earth in the same time that the earth revolves round the sun, she would have been always at the full, and would have shone every night of the year. J. S. Mill grows more than usually

[1] Book ii, 77–v, 196. [2] See, on this, Flint's *Theism*, p. 413.

eloquent on the maladjustments of the world,[1] which seem to him to prove that God must be either lacking in perfect wisdom or in perfect goodness. Many physiologists complain of the existence of certain needless organs in the bodies of animals, and of the imperfection of other organs. The sting of the bee has been severely criticised by Darwin ; the eye has been roundly denounced as a very faulty optical instrument by Helmholtz and Haeckel. One writer has declared that if a human optician were to blunder as badly as the supposed author of eyes has done, he would be hissed out of his trade ; for it is guilty of chromatic aberration, of spherical aberration, of possessing a blind spot right in its centre, of needless radiation of the light, of shadow cast on the retina by the clumsy arrangement of its blood-vessels, and of the imperfect sensitiveness of the yellow spot which is the actual centre of vision. The method of birth, and the fact of death ; the presence of disease, of monstrosities, of insanity, of abortions,—these and other baffling facts have been singled out for denunciation, sometimes in a way that suggests that the veriest tyro at the work of creation would have done better than the supposedly All-wise God who made heaven and earth.

1. In order to reduce this onslaught on the purposefulness of the creative process in detail to something like reasonable proportion, it may be pointed out, in the first place, that these alleged blemishes and maladjustments are thoroughly exceptional to the general order. Recent biological as well as physical science have in nothing so greatly enriched the arguments of Natural Theology as in multiplying the evidence of

[1] *Three Essays on Religion*, pp. 28–31. Mill, however, places the argument from design in the forefront of theistic evidences.

the orderliness of creation, and, particularly, of the far-reaching, subtle, delicate, and ingenious adaptations that are met with in every field of organic life. So thoroughly has the principle of adaptation become a postulate of biology, that nowadays every investigator starts with the assumption that the minutest peculiarities, structural and functional, of living creatures—the down on a butterfly's wing, the number of spots on a peacock's tail, or of rings in an earthworm, or of legs in a caterpillar—have their specific ends to serve, and their vital uses for the animal possessing them ; and, as a rule that has few exceptions, he takes for granted, not that the alleged maladjustments are real, but that they are as purposive as other known adaptations, and will some day unfold their uses to a more accurate or fortunate observer. For these reasons the biologist of the future is not likely to be so free with his criticisms of the cosmic order as were his predecessors. The argument from ignorance is apt to recoil sharply on the heads of its exponents.

2. In view of the criticisms that have been passed on the efficiency of the cosmic order for its complicated ends, it may be further said that many of them have already been proved to be foolish and irrelevant, while others palpably bear the mark of having been made in ignorance of vital facts. For instance, it has been shown that if Comte had had his way as regards the plane of the ecliptic, the whole mechanism of the solar system would have been thrown into disorder, and other and worse " evils " entailed ; that if the moon had been made to revolve as he (and Laplace) suggested, we would have had only one-sixteenth of the moonlight we now enjoy ; that, further, she would have been in constant danger of extinction ; and that

for other uses which she now subserves, notably the formation of tides, she would have been totally inoperative.[1] As regards the eye, the criticisms passed on it as an optical lens are clearly irrelevant when we remember that the eye is not an optical instrument, but *an organ of vision*; that its efficiency as such does not make optical perfection in any way needful; and that each animal normally possesses just that range and efficiency of vision most suitable for its own particular vital purposes.[2] Other criticisms have clearly been made from an equally irrelevant standpoint, or too narrow a view of facts. We speak, for instance, of deserts and waste places on the earth's surface; such derogatory terms meaning simply that for purposes of human utility and gain these tracts of land and sea are so far useless. But have these vast areas no other uses than those which have been

[1] See Flint's *Theism*, p. 238.

[2] Helmholtz, while agreeing with Haeckel as to the imperfection of the eye as an optical lens, concludes his strictures with an admission which entirely neutralises them. "All these imperfections would be exceedingly troublesome in an artificial *camera obscura*, and in the photographic picture it produced. But they are not so in the eye: so little indeed, that it was very difficult to discover them. The reason of their not interfering with our perception of external objects is not only that we have two eyes, and so that one makes up for the defect of the other . . . (but that) we are continually moving the eye, and also that the imperfections almost always affect those parts of the field of vision to which we are not at the moment directing our attention. . . . The adaptation of the eye to its function is therefore most complete, and is seen in the very limits which are set to its defects. Here the result which may be reached by innumerable generations, working under the Darwinian law of inheritance, coincides with what the wisest Wisdom may have devised beforehand" (*Popular Lectures on Scientific Subjects*, pp. 224 and 228). Cf. Ward, *Realm of Ends*, p. 360: "It would be hard to find a single instance in which suggestions for the better remoulding of the physical world have not been shown by wiser men than their authors to be only specifications for a 'fool's paradise.'"

already ascertained? Have not many natural objects and conditions which were formerly considered useless or wasteful unfolded unsuspected uses? Perhaps before another century is out, the Sahara itself will be one of the most valuable tracts of land on the earth's surface—a mine of mechanical force through the discovery of hitherto undiscovered elements beneath its surface or a sanatorium for all manner of diseases. Speaking of this criticism by Lucretius, Dr. Martineau writes thus: "The Roman poet, it seems, would have preferred a human estate all under culture, compact and occupied, uniform in temperature, and with no more water than was needful for irrigation and for drink; with no moor and mountain to part the fields, no freshening play of ocean and air where man is not, no refrigerating winds to fling a wreath of snow, no African glow to cross over and move the Alpine glaciers; but a snug little planet, without a waste place or a wild beast, and so comfortable that it would soon swarm like a Chinese empire on an ant-hill, and 'no one could be alone in all the earth.' This is the landscape-gardening of philosophy; from which for my part I gladly escape back to the wild forest or the open sea, or even the stern wonders of the icebergs and the northern lights. On Comte's proposal for improving the moon by having it full every night, I could pass no mathematical judgment; his scientific critics say it would be fatal to the planet's equilibrium; but I confess to such a love of the monthly story of the orb from the first crescent to the last decrescent phase that, to save it, I would accept a gaslight, or even carry a lantern on dark nights." [1] In the same way Dr. Martineau deals in detail with the objections raised against the sting of the bee,

[1] *A Study of Religion*, i. 354.

which, in attacking other animals, cannot be withdrawn owing to the backward serratures, which incidentally causes the death of the insect by tearing out its viscera. This is a case of the misapplication of a tool meant originally as a drill for cutting grooves in wood (like the ovipositor of the saw-fly) which in moments of madness the bee turns into a weapon of attack—a use for which it is not adapted. In this instance we see a practical working of the law of natural selection, which, in the end, will either eliminate the perverted instinct, or equip the species which manifests it with a better weapon. At the present stage we are in the workshop watching an unfinished product—a tool in the process of being transformed into a weapon, and the only objection that can be legitimately raised is that the process of adjustment takes such a long time, and causes such a considerable amount of suffering on the way.

We have not yet, however, come to the final answer to these objections drawn from the imperfect attainment of purposeful ends in certain details of organic life. It is not enough to point out that problems of this kind are attacked with very imperfect knowledge of the particular end at which Nature is "aiming," which will account for many false and hasty deductions. For it must be confessed freely that if malformations, and abortive organs, and badly adjusted functions are thoroughly exceptional on the whole yet they do here and there occur. *The point is that under the conditions this could not be otherwise.* The universe is not a static, but a developing order. If the former were the case, then the objections urged would be unanswerable. A "finished" world made by an All-wise and All-powerful Creator would have to be a perfectly adjusted world. But such objec-

tions lose their force when directed against a cosmos in a condition of development from simple to complex, from lower to higher. The perfection of a world like this must therefore be sought in the future, not in the present. You cannot logically take a cross-cut section of a process and judge it by its loose and bleeding ends; you must wait till all the threads are tied into the final knot, and the "pile is complete," before you can finally judge of its meaning and value. *Functions* as well as *organs* have a history, and this history is of a reciprocal relation; half-evolved functions cannot command anything better than a half-evolved organ; and not till the function has been clearly defined can you judge whether its organ fitly fulfils it.[1] This is implied in the very notion of evolution, which means a gradual, as opposed to a sudden, adaptation of means to ends; and therefore evolutionary scientists should be the last to turn into hasty critics of the process. This is specially so in view of the fact that in all cases of fully developed organs and functions there is the very nicest adaptation of means to ends which it is possible under the conditions to realise; it is indeed by the study of such organs that the idea of adaptation (which results in in the fulfilment of *ends*) has been discovered to be the key to the mystery of organic nature in every nook and cranny of her vast domains. We may say further that such "malformations" as rudimentary organs, which represent the temporary persistence of organs which have outlived their function, have incidentally become one of the most fruitful fields of evidence for the establishment of the evolutionary hypothesis, by marking out the paths along which the

[1] See *A Study of Religion*, i, pp. 366, 367, especially the latter page, for a further modification of this argument.

upward movement of life has been marching, and that without these finger-posts, the branching and crossing lines of evolution, so skilfully traced by Darwin, would have been much more obscure than they are and the survey of the organic kingdom would still have been in its elementary stage.[1] Both the normal and the abnormal facts of organic life have thus joined hands in helping us to discover and define the fact of purpose in creation.

II

We pass to the other group of objections—those arising from *the immense overplus of resources* expended in the production of such purposeful ends as are realised in organic nature, especially the great end of the "progress of the whole."

The gist of this argument is as follows. A great many more creatures are born into the world than can possibly survive under the conditions of their existence; and organic progress is attained not by a wise selective skill in the variations that occur, but by the wasteful and destructive process of natural selection—that is, by killing off the less suitable variations.

There are here two objections, distinguishable in thought, though they are so closely related as to be best considered together. First, there is the "unnecessary" fertility and variability of organisms; and secondly there is the expensive method of securing the elimination of all variations other than those best fitted to survive.

As to the over-fertility of species, this is one of the most patent and often-emphasised facts in biology;

[1] *A Study of Religion*, i. 359.

and it is needless to go into it at any length. Nature provides an intensity of vitality in the process of reproduction which strikes the imagination with wonder in every department of animate existence. If emphasis is put on any one process more than another, on any one end above all competing ends, it is this—at all costs to secure the continuance of the species through the fertility of individuals. She secures fecundation through concentrating in the act of conception the satisfaction of the most imperious of all instincts ; and in the case of many species she meets all future contingencies by securing the birth of an immense overplus of individuals, so that, if many die before their turn arrives for perpetuating their kind, there are still plenty of others left to fulfil this function. But survival of species is not her only object ; she seems at least to strain after progress, and this end, again, is secured by the superabundant vitality *plus* variableness which gives the most suitable individuals a superior chance in the struggle for survival. But, the objection is—" Why this waste ? " Could not the end have been secured by a more economical and purposeful adaptation of means to ends ? Might not there be far fewer creatures born, and these better fitted for both survival and progress ? Why sacrifice such a holocaust of victims on the altar of efficiency and progress, when the same end could be attained in a way which would not be open to this obvious objection ? And in any case, can we speak of such a process as truly teleological ? Is not Lange right in his celebrated indictment of the alleged purposefulness of Nature ? " We can," he writes, " no longer doubt that Nature proceeds in a way which in no way resembles human design ; indeed that her most essential means, if estimated by the rule of the human

understanding, most be regarded as equivalent to the blindest accident. On this point no further proof is to be looked for, for facts speak so plainly, and with such unbroken accord in the various provinces of Nature, that no view of the world is any longer admissible which is at variance with these facts and their irresistible significance. If a man, in order to shoot a hare, fired off millions of gun-barrels in all random directions upon a great moor; if, in order to get into a shut-up room, he brought 10,000 keys at haphazard and tried them all; if, in order to build a house, he built a city and abandoned the superfluous houses to wind and weather,—no one, I suppose, would call such action an example of design, and much less should we suppose that in this procedure there lay any higher wisdom, recondite reasons, and superior skill." [1]

This rhetorical passage is quoted because it is typical of many others scattered through the works of anti-teleological writers on biology. In reply we put forth two considerations. In the first place, the alleged facts are not true. Nature does not produce failures in such prodigal numbers as are here suggested. If such an indictment were sound, for every straight-limbed healthy child there would be a million lame, malformed, and rickety children; for every bird able to wing its flight through the air, and to sing its love-song above its nest, there would be countless hosts of birds that could not fly at all, and whose notes would be unmusical. On the other hand, we know that it is rather one child in a million who is hopelessly deformed, while the vast majority are more or less normal; that the healthy births in nature inconceivably outnumber the abortions or mon-

[1] *History of Materialism* (Engl. trans.), 2, p. 246.

strosities [1]; that animals generally repeat the favourable variations of their parents, and that the efficiency of life is on the whole one of its most wonderful and fascinating aspects. What is true is that a large proportion of the normal progeny of animals is cut off before arriving at the stage of maturity which is the "end" for which they are born; but that is a different question, which we will deal with a little later.

In the second place, Lange in the above passage ignores the distinction between *intrinsic* and *ultimate* ends in organic life. He and other writers are so absorbed in the latter conception, which is the ruling conception in biology, that he seems to think that every creature is born into the world simply with a view to the improvement of the species, or of becoming a starting-point for the evolution of new species. This is a distorted point of view. Seeing that only one creature in a thousand varies in the exact line that leads to greater efficiency in the life-struggle, he seems to take for granted that that creature alone has attained its "end" which is in the line of organic progress, and that the rest are more or less failures. But, each and every creature is first of all an *end in itself*, having its own purpose to serve, and its own place to fill; it comes into the world, in other words, to live its own life. From this standpoint every animal would perfectly fulfil its end even though there were no such thing as racial progress in the universe; for so far its *intrinsic* ends would be completely attained. The number of real organic failures is in-

[1] It is stated by eminent medical authorities that 95 per cent. of human births even in the slums of great cities are thoroughly normal and healthy. Child mortality is the result of ignorance and neglect, not of abnormality.

deed quite negligible, and is due to the intercrossing of vital forces, which happen to combine unfavourably for a creature here and there, the majority of creatures living a happy, vigorous, and fairly full life so long as it lasts. And even of those creatures that are cut off before reaching maturity, can it be said they have failed in realising at least partially the end of their being? True, they do not complete the average span of existence, and, so far, all their inherent possibilities are not actualised; the ideal specific end is not attained in their particular case. None the less their individual life, if life is a good in itself (as is assumed in the very phrase "premature extinction")—is a positive boon for them *while it lasts*. Who can watch the gambolling of lambs, and the fine play of an infant's limbs, and the vital exuberance of a fledgeling's joy in life, and doubt that though they be cut off in the very promise of their youth, such life as they have had has been worth having? *Some* end has been achieved by all these incomplete lives—the end of a realised *present* existence which is worth having so far as it goes. And if they die prematurely in order to make room for others, or to serve as food for other creatures, there may be a certain element of sacrifice in such a process, but there can be no "waste" in the proper sense of the term.

The objection raised to the premature deaths of living creatures loses its remaining aspect of wastefulness when we recognise that the overplus of births not only secures the continuance of the species in the face of the contingencies of existence, but also serves manifold *ex*trinsic ends, organic and physical. From this point of view there is nothing more remarkable in Nature than the close and rigid economy which is shown in utilising all the results of organic life.

Many animals prey on one another, consuming enormous quantities of lesser creatures at a meal; others feast on the remains of the dead; and the bodies of others are dissolved by minute organisms into fructifying compost for the vegetable growths which in turn nourish the herbivorous species. There is not a particle of organic matter that is not fully utilised in some way or other, so that when animals have partially and completely fulfilled their *intrinsic* ends, and are being carried decently out to burial, their remains serve innumerable *extrinsic* ends in the wider cosmic economy. The physical law of action and reaction is not more invariable than that of the close and careful manner in which Nature utilises her "waste" or used-up products for fresh purposes. Tennyson's oft-quoted lines in *In Memoriam* express this fact in melodious language:

> "That nothing walks with aimless feet,
> That not one life shall be destroyed,
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,
> When God hath made the pile complete;
>
> That not a worm is cloven in vain,
> That not a moth with vain desire
> Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
> Or but subserves another's gain."[1]

What he here expresses as an act of faith has long since been proved a sure and widespread fact of science. It is a signal instance of the law that true poetry and exact knowledge are often twin sisters.

III

There is, however, an element of truth in both these types of objection to the teleological law of the organic

[1] *In Memoriam*, liv.

world which has already been touched on, though it is in a direction that is seldom realised, and still more seldom clearly expressed. The exaggerated charges against the fact of purpose in the organic world are urged on the basis of an assumption already mentioned in passing. That assumption is that we should naturally expect all purposive action in Nature to follow clearly economic lines, as is done by human intelligence at its best; nay, that in proportion as omniscience is superior to human intelligence, so clearly should the attainment of ends in Nature surpass in cogency and delicacy the manner in which men attain them.

1. Now it is abundantly clear that this analogy between the teleology manifested in organic nature and human teleology fails in one important respect. If we look at the slow upward march of organic evolution, we cannot but be struck with an appearance of *uncertainty* in the movement. It has been likened to the movement of an intelligent creature half awake, but not yet fully alive to its environment; or of a half-blinded man who has a clear idea of what he wishes to do, and where he wants to go, but has to feel slowly and tentatively for his pathway. It is this appearance of a "fumbling" element in Nature that gives its plausibility to Schopenhauer's doctrine of blind Will as the operative principle in creation; of a Will, i.e., which at first is purely unintelligent and unconscious, and which slowly becomes both conscious and intelligent in man. Evolution indeed appears to be the resultant of innumerable effects of vital force in all, or at least in many directions, till the line of least resistance (or greatest advantage) is struck, after which it becomes gradually definite and unmistakable. And the question inevitably suggests itself

—can there be a wise and purposeful Being behind movements so dimly and imperfectly teleological as these? Does it not seem rather as though a Demiurge of a very different order of intelligence and wisdom were at work? Or, in John Stuart Mill's phrase, do not the facts of Nature rather suggest that the God whose character is revealed in Nature must be either not all-wise or not all-powerful?

The answer to this question is not to be found in denying or minimising the facts, but in revising the assumption that lies behind the suggested explanation. If we are to conceive of the phenomena of creation as the result of the direct unmediated action of the divine will, as though God were personally incarnate in the cosmos, then the dilemma suggested by Mill cannot be avoided. The testimony of Nature in that case is that He must either be lacking in efficiency of will or perfection of wisdom, but pursues His ends after the manner of trial and error, correcting His mistakes, and improving on His experiments, till at last His attained purpose emerges clear and convincing. But we have already pointed out that Nature is not the incarnation of God, that He Himself is not fully immanent in the world, and that His Reason and Will are only capable of being *progressively* revealed in the ascending fields of Nature. He fulfils His ends in Nature through the medium of efficient or mechanical causes which act according to the conditions and limitations of the physical world, and which enable Him to reveal His purpose only by slow and apparently tentative degrees. What we do see in Nature is what may be called the evolution of a teleological principle or method. The very word "evolution" suggests that this is God's method of attaining His ends; for it means creation by degrees, by stages, by an upward

movement, at first dim and uncertain, which gradually clears itself of ambiguity, and shapes out its course by deepening and defining the channel of its action. In the lower ranges of life the divine purpose would therefore be only faintly suggested; as we rise in the hierarchy of being it would be seen "in broken arcs," and not till the final consummation of all things could it be seen through all its myriad stages and ramifications in the "perfect round," as the embodiment of a divine purpose as unmistakable as it is glorious and satisfying. Viewed at any stage *in transitu* this organic purpose would be seen as a mighty river bounded by rugged and broken banks, turning now here now there according as the conditions of the environment impeded or hastened its current; viewed from its ultimate issues, all the stages would fall into perspective and harmony, and every step would be seen to be just such an expression of perfect Reason and Will as was possible under the conditions at any given moment. And what would be true of the completed end of Nature as a whole is clearly true of the minor ends attained on the way. Each organ is seen to be gradually formed, at first in dim suggestion, then in partial realisation, finally in perfect fulfilment. Thus the eye, first noticed as a spot of pigment responsive to light, gradually differentiates its parts and elaborates their functions till the complete but infinitely complex organ of vision appears, capable of fulfilling its special uses in a thousand creatures, differing in untold ways in accordance with special needs, but always manifesting just that kind and intensity of vision that are necessary for the attainment of their intrinsic ends. And so with all the other organs of the body; so with individual organisms; so with successive series of organisms in the ascending scale of life; so with man

himself as the physical crown of creation. The efficiency which is Nature's goal is *vital efficiency*—just so much as and no more than is needful for the continuance and slow rise of life as it climbs up to man through "all the spires of form"; and all the steps in this teleological process must be judged, not by any fictitious standard of perfection, but in view of the particular conditions at each stage.

2. It would be well, in closing this discussion, to point out another difference between the human and divine methods of working towards an "end." In all human teleological action, the aim is to attain the end with as little expenditure of effort or "waste" of material as possible. Any lavish or apparently unnecessary use of either is considered a sign of insufficient concentration of mind or of imperfect control of the material conditions. Under the conditions of human effort, this is a perfectly legitimate standard of judgment. In the case of finite creatures like ourselves, limited in wisdom and resources, the more definite and direct the line that leads from the idea to its fulfilment, the more satisfying is the impression made by every purposeful act. When, however, we apply the same criterion in judging of the divine method of procedure, we are guilty of a narrow kind of anthropomorphism. God has many simultaneous ends to serve in every teleological act, beside the one which we for purposes of our own choose to isolate from the rest; and what appears to be "waste," from that limited standpoint, may be but wealth of resources and a depth of wisdom beyond our soundings from a wider outlook. In this connection Dr. Martineau's picturesque words are worthy of careful consideration:

"When we are offended by the superabundant genesis of things as so much *waste*, we forget that *Nature has no*

occasion for parsimony, and that it is only in our finite economy that a close reckoning of resources acquires an appropriate place. With Plato, the crowning glory of the creative power was its 'ungrudgingness'; and if, in tenanting the elements with life, a liberal margin was left for its possibility beyond its actual range at the moment, it expressed the large thought and ample resources of the Maker, without harm to any creature that He had made. With all the copiousness of supply, there are times in the history of every species which so reduce it here and there as to threaten it with extinction, were it not on the average superfluously prolific; for the physical laws of its abode are not made for it alone, and in working out their more comprehensive ends may often bear hardly on its particular interests, and sweep its promise away by frost or wind or flood, and then it is that, by moving forward its resources, which else would never come into play, it saves the field. And at seasons when they are not 'wanted,' why should we grudge to the forest its rich carpet of superfluities—the beech-mast, the acorns, the fir-cones, the whortleberries and the bracken, that are content to give their variegated pattern to the grass before they die? Would you prefer to count out the exact numbers of spores that are destined to become adult, and prohibit all the rest? Is it possible to apply a more niggardly conception than this doctrine of worth to the universal Cause? It is worthily answered by Madame Dudevant when she says, 'Dirons-nous que la floraison exuberante des arbres a fruit est une erreur de la Nature? La Nature est prodigue, parce qu'elle est riche, et non parce qu'elle est folle.'"[1]

IV

Two other widespread facts in the animal economy are sometimes urged against the teleological principle

[1] *A Study of Religion*, i, pp. 369, 370. ("Do we call the exuberant blossoming of fruit-trees an error of Nature? Nature is prodigal because she is rich, not because she is foolish." Ibid.)

Cf. Goethe's rhapsody: "I adore that God who has laid such a power of production in the world, that even if but a millionth part thereof cometh to perfection, the world so swarms with creatures that war, pestilence, fire, or flood cannot overwhelm it. *This is my God!*" See Martensen's *Christian Ethics*, p. 169.

in Nature. The first is that so many creatures live *on* other creatures as their means of subsistence. The second is the undoubted fact of parasitism, i.e. that so many organisms subsist *in* the bodies of other creatures.

Strictly speaking, these indicate not so much an argument against the purposefulness of Nature, as an indictment against the benevolence of the Creator ; but the two questions are closely related ; and it will be convenient to deal with them here.

That a large proportion of the animal world lives on the rest is a commonplace of observation. The carnivores are not the only creatures which subsist on animals less able to defend themselves, for most living forms, incidentally if not directly, destroy life in the act of feeding. This has long been felt to be a difficulty for Christian theism ; so much so that not a few sensitive souls feel it necessary to postulate the interference of some evil spirit in the creative process.[1] We cannot but feel that this is a counsel of despair, for it introduces a dualism into Nature which would destroy all confidence in her unity and order. Hard as it may be to believe in the goodness of the Creator in view of the fact that He has made some creatures flesh-eating, and capable of surviving only by destroying the lives of other and more harmless creatures, we hold that it is better to recognise the fact, and wait for the explanation, rather than hastily make so drastic an inference as the one above suggested. In a later chapter we deal with the problem of suffering in the animal creation. These are other considerations that modify a pessimistic conclusion. Nature, for instance, equips the hunted with various qualities that mitigate their lot in many ways. Both their organic and mental characteristics are adapted

[1] See *Evil and Evolution*, by the author of *Our Social Horizons*.

to their vital conditions. There is no reason to believe that they spend their lives in a state of perpetual terror as some sentimentalists would fain have us believe; and if the successful kill has its joys, so has the successful flight. Nor is there any doubt that the fact of hunting and being hunted has high evolutionary value in developing beauty and swiftness of form, and in stimulating psychic development in countless ways. Safety and freedom from the need of making exertion are debilitating elements in the lot of all living beings, man included; it is the jeopardies and insecurities of life that have been the chief stimulants of both health and betterment in all the kingdoms of life and mind. Better a world in which living creatures have to hunt or escape by strenuous efforts than a placid existence where all is security and dullness, and no demand is made for the exercise of life's ultimate resources for survival and development. Such has been the creative method; and, stern though it be, there is benevolence at the heart of it.

The fact of parasitism presents a more difficult problem. Biologically it is the result of the immensely prolific character of the life-principle, whose rich potencies overflow into every possible nook and cranny of the physical world, and realise themselves even at the risk of partially defeating the evolutionary process by over-fecundity. It is said that at least half the existing species are either parasitic or semi-parasitic in habit, i.e. live at the expense of other and higher organisms in or on whose bodies and at the expense of whose vitality they live. We must, however, not infer that this goes on always to the detriment of the "hosts" on which their parasites subsist. There are compensations, sometimes by adaptation of the

" host " to its condition by heightened vitality, and in other ways. Usually, however, the parasite, especially when descended from a " free-living " creature, degenerates by the loss of organs no longer necessary for its vital purposes, and of psychic intensity and range ; and the " host " suffers a certain loss of activity and health. On the whole, it must be allowed that parasitism represents the *katabolic* or dissipative aspect of existence ; life has to struggle to maintain itself against the tendency ; and on the whole it has not sufficed to hinder a general advance in the long run. At our present stage of knowledge perhaps that is all that can be said about it.

V

Another charge brought against the purposefulness of Nature's processes is the baffling presence of death in the organic world.

This indeed is one of the most difficult questions. Why should death have intruded at all into the cosmos ? If life is a boon to all creatures, even when enjoyed only in imperfect measures and for a brief span of time, does it not follow that death must be an inherent evil, which has no real function to fulfil in an ordered and progressive world ? Can we help feeling, as we see the inevitable law of decay and dissolution gradually overtaking the evolving process of life and finally stilling its happy pulses, that " an enemy hath done this," and that failure, and not accomplishment, is the last word that biology has to pronounce on the upward movement of evolution ? If the myriad paths of life at last lead only into a *grave*, what does the whole process amount to but " a tale full of sound and fury, signifying—nothing " ?

What kind of Demiurge must He be who spends such immeasurable æons of time, such incalculable resources of wisdom, such inexhaustible ingenuities of method in filling His world (perhaps many of His worlds) with a myriad happy forms of life, only afterwards to undo His own work, and toss the products of His skill into the empty chasm of death—and begin again?

In answer to this objection it is enough to show that death, so far from being functionless, has a useful and necessary place to fill in the economy of life.

That death does really exercise such a function is implied in the phrase most characteristic of modern biology. For what is the principle which that science has discovered to lie at the root of all organic progress? It is the principle of Natural Selection. And what is Natural Selection? This term is, as we have elsewhere [1] endeavoured to show, only another name for the *eliminating forces of death*, which remove the imperfect results and waste products of life out of the way, that its more efficient forms may have a better opportunity of realising themselves. It is Nature's scavenger, which clears away the worn-out products of the evolutionary process. But for this law of "selection," which in Darwin's words (already quoted) "acting during long ages and rigidly scrutinising the whole constitution, structure and habits of each creature favouring the good, rejecting the bad," there would have been, under the actual conditions of the physical and organic universe, no such thing as evolution. It would have been a universe of quantity, not of quality, and would still be filled with only the lowest forms

[1] *The Ascent through Christ*, p. 40. See also on the subject of this chapter the same work, book i, chap. v, on "the Relation between Death and Sin," where the place of death in evolution is expounded from another point of view (pp. 169–85).

of life. Death is thus the servant of Life; it came that there might be more life and more abundant life.

More particularly we may analyse the place of death in evolution in this way:

1. Death is not a necessary function, or consequence, or corollary of life as such.[1] It is a product of evolution, and a condition of further evolution. It has now been shown that life had existed for a long period before the entrance of death into the world; in fact, the intrusion of death opened a distinctly late chapter in its history. For an unknown period, generation after generation of living things came into being, each of which was potentially immortal. This period coincided with the reign of "unicellular life." The distinctive marks of these organisms are as follows: (1) they are lowest in the scale of being; (2) they are uni-sexual and propagate by "fission"; and (3) they are non-progressive, i.e. they lie at the base of the ascending series of life; they are the που στῶ from which its upward movement starts. In these realms of organic being, the parents, having subdivided themselves into their offspring, continue to live on indefinitely, having in themselves the capacity, so far as we know, for perpetual self-renewal (or "rejuvenescence"), but having no capacity of evolving into any fresh or more perfect forms.[2] Thus, in the stagnant and non-

[1] "Death is not an essential attribute of living matter; it is neither essentially associated with reproduction nor a necessary consequence of it" (Weismann, *Essays on Heredity*, vol. i, pp. 160, 161).

[2] Weismann conceives the protoplasm of the unicellular organisms to be such that the cycle of life returns to its starting point, like the circulation of water. "As in the physical and chemical properties of water there is no inherent cause for the cessation of this cycle, so there is no reason in the physical condition of unicellular organisms why the cycle of life, i.e. of division, growth by assimilation, should ever end; and this characteristic I have termed immortality." (See *Nature*, Feb. 1890, vol. 41, pp. 317–23.)

progressive *infusoria* we can see what kind of a living universe there would be, if death had never entered into the world.

2. The time came, however, when the potencies of life broke through the confines of the unicellular order ; the cells of which these were composed began to split and differentiate into two kinds—the *somatic* or bodily cells, whose functions were concerned only with the well-being of the individual creature, and the *reproductive* or germ-cells, whose function it was to conserve and carry on the living principle into the next generation. With the appearance of this specialisation, another crucial phenomenon appeared—that of *sex*, whose function it is to make the process of reproduction *sure* and *progressive*. It makes it sure in ways too numerous to mention, and it makes it progressive in virtue of the fact that through the intermingling of the male and female germ-plasm there is a perpetual fusion of the individual characteristics of the male and female parents, and a no less marked reinvigoration of the life principle, thus laying down the basis, and ensuring the continuance, of the process of heredity. Now it is the characteristic of the somatic or individual cells that they are perishable, while the reproductive cells are potentially immortal, i.e. they may be destroyed by accident, but there is no element of self-exhaustion in them. Thus, the individual perishes, but the germ-plasm which it passes on to its descendants continues to manifest in them, and in future generations, its own unexhausted and apparently inexhaustible vital activity.

3. *Why, then, does the individual die?* Why, in other words, are not the somatic cells as immortal as the reproductive? The *physical* reason for this is

not as yet apparent.[1] But the *biological* significance of these facts is clear. Perhaps indeed no more remarkable or beautiful discovery has ever been made in the realms of organic life than that which has revealed the function of "mortality" among multicellular creatures. A simple illustration will make the matter clear. We are all familiar with the distinction between the shell and the kernel of a nut. The shell and inner integuments or wrappings represent the somatic or bodily cells of the organism; the kernel contains the germ-plasm, or reproductive cells. Now it is clear to the least observant eye that the shell represents the perishable or mortal part of the nut; its function is simply to afford protection to the kernel (or potentially imperishable part) till it is able to germinate by striking root into the soil. A very slight acquaintance with the life-history of a nut will prove that the character and consistency of the shell is most carefully adjusted to the conditions of its habitat; that its hardness, toughness, and capacity to resist the weather are what they are with a view to enable the germ to become safely vitalised in a particular environment, and at the proper time. Having fulfilled this function, the shell perishes because its function is fulfilled. Now this little drama of death and reproduction is fulfilled throughout the whole range of multicellular life, in its highest as well as its lowest forms. And the law which these facts reveal is this—that Life is greater than its manifestations; in other words, that the *individual biologically exists for the species*, and that

[1] This question has long interested biologists. Metchnikoff, in *The Nature of Man*, gives evidence tending to the conclusion that though man seems essentially mortal so far as his physical frame is concerned, the average length of life may be much increased by the elimination of the poisonous germs which lodge in his digestive system.

while the individual is mortal, having only a temporary place to fulfil, the species is potentially immortal, and that so long as the physical conditions remain which make its continuance possible, it will go on multiplying indefinitely and for ever.

This general conclusion as to the relation of the individual to the species is confirmed by many observations as to the average length of life among the various species of animals. It has been found that individuals as a matter of observable fact *live approximately only so long as their existence is needful for the proper conservation and continuance of their kind.* A kind of balance is found to exist between the propagative power of individuals and their length of days. Creatures that propagate at a great pace die off quickly, those that multiply slowly live long. This law holds true even of the comparative length of life of the sexes. For instance, the females of one kind of moth rarely live more than three or four days; while the males which fly swiftly in the forests, seeking for the less abundant females, live for a longer period, certainly from eight to fourteen days.[1] The queen bee lives two or three years, if not longer; but the drones (males) are allowed to live only four or five months[2]—so long as it is useful for them to live, since their value for the colony ceases with the nuptial flight. Such creatures as are in constant peril from the accidents of their environment, and the attacks of preying animals, propagate at an enormous rate. This is specially the case with fishes whose ova are deposited either in the open sea or in exposed situations. But creatures in whom the parental instinct is strongly

[1] *The Place of Death in Evolution*, by Newman Smyth, p. 34.

[2] After the fecundation of the queen bee the now useless males are at once destroyed by the rest of the hive.

developed, and which therefore take great care of their young when in a state of helplessness (such as many species of *carnivores* and *herbivores*), have a limited offspring, and live a comparatively long time. Thus, at both extremes of the scale, we find abundant proof that death is no enemy to life, but a sentinel guarding the portals and exits, with a view to securing, under the conditions, the surest conservation of animal life. In all probability, the same organic law has so far governed the natural rate of births and the normal limits of life in the case of the human race.

Or, we may approach the same problem from another side. Speaking sociologically, death not only safeguards Life, and ensures its developments, but provides *the conditions needful to the fullest realisation* of Life's possibilities. Were it not that the generations come and go, so that each passing generation leaves elbow-room for that which succeeds, even a slow rate of propagation would result in time in over-populating the globe, and in making existence itself impossible. As it is, the amazing fecundity of Nature has free and constant play, and countless individual lives have a chance of realising themselves, and so of re-enacting the entrancing drama of the individual life, without interfering with the chances of those that come after. In this direction, her one care seems to be to provide for the greatest good of the greatest possible number of living beings. More than this. By the law of generation and death, the conditions are provided for organic *progress*, which means in the end individual happiness and efficiency. Birth conserves the results of past progress by heredity, and opens the way for favourable variations, while death clears away the obstructives (i.e. the less efficient and worn-out individuals) and leaves the ground free for further advance.

"In the mechanism of Nature, it means that death itself is one of the methods or contrivances which Nature has devised and steadily uses in order to carry her workmanship on, and to make finer products. It means that death in the course of Nature is not to be regarded as a disaster—the breaking of a wheel, or parting of a belt in Nature's workshop—but rather as the introduction of a new device for turning out improved manufactures. . . . So death as an adaptation in the divine economy of Nature is introduced as a means of life, of ever-increasing and happier life.[1]"

Thus, what has been said about the function of death in the organic world strongly reinforces the teleological view of Nature. It embodies what Mr. Kidd, in his *Principles of Western Civilisation,* calls the principle of Projected Efficiency. That is to say, the conditions which determine the incidence of death in the case of the individual have a definite relation to the future welfare of the species. It has, in other words, a prophetic look. The controlling principle lies in an as yet unrealised good, which is hidden in the future, and has the interests of unborn generations in view. Now this means no more and no less than that the movement of the organic world, checked and controlled by the law of death, is a purposive movement. Darwin indeed failed to realise this wider aspect of the beautifully efficient law of Natural Selection, which it was his life-work to discover and illustrate. In the concluding chapter of the *Origin of Species,* he insists that his object throughout has been to show that Natural Selection works "solely by and for the good of each being."[2] And yet, implicit in the very heart of his system, there was a meaning "which carries us as far beyond the import of Darwin's contribution

[1] Newman Smyth, *The Place of Death in Evolution,* pp. 31, 32.
[2] *Origin of Species,* p. 428.

to knowledge as the Darwinian hypothesis study carried us beyond the mere elementary conceptions of Goethe and Lamarck." [1] This meaning we have here tried to unfold. It is that the purely mechanical principle of Natural Selection affords scope for the action of a teleological principle which realises through the elimination of the individual the progress of unborn generations in the future. *Selection by death* is thus but the minister of an ever-expanding *progressiveness in Life.*[2]

We may go a step farther and point out the bearing of this fact of death on the question of human immortality. Man on the physical side is one with organic nature; and he is mortal, as other beings are mortal. Of him as a physical individual we may say that he is only a link in the life of the species; "one generation goeth and another cometh." But spiritually, there is nothing essentially mortal in a human soul; its very yearning for endless and ever-enriching existence suggests that there is a qualitative difference in its life as compared with that of lower creatures. May it not be true that, just as among the latter death is the minister of projected efficiency for the species, so, in the case of man, death becomes the minister of a projected spiritual efficiency for the individual? Death spares the physical organism that has acquired

[1] Kidd's *Principles of Western Civilisation*, p. 32.

[2] Even Weismann, who wages uncompromising war on the argument of the teleologist, feels bound to confess that "natural death is a phenomenon . . . which up to a certain point we can quite well understand from the standpoint of purposefulness" (*The Evolution Theory*, i, p. 263). But, as Walker aptly states, when Weismann repudiates the doctrine of design he means no more than "particular design over each individual form that he excludes; the whole is embraced in a wider design, although that does not give effect to itself in the manner once commonly supposed" (*Christian Theism*, p. 136).

a "survival value" till its full function has been attained in the projection of its life into that of its offspring. Is it unreasonable to believe that the human soul has reached such spiritual significance as to have survival value in and for itself, so that death (i.e. extinction) has "no more dominion over it," and can do no more than release the spirit from its perishable and worn-out envelope of flesh, and so free it for a fuller realisation of its possibilities in another state of existence?

> "Then those that did not blink the horror, saw
> That Death was cast to ground, and slowly rose.
> But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the skull.
> Half fell to right, and half to left, and lay.
> Then with a stronger buffet he clove the helm,
> As throughly as the skull; and out from this
> Issued the bright face of a blooming Boy
> Fresh as a flower new-born."[1]

[1] Tennyson, "Gareth and Lynette."

CHAPTER III

CONSTRUCTIVE ARGUMENT

"The greater steps in advance in the organic world compel us to interpret the general scheme of Evolution as primarily a materialised ethical process underlying all appearances of a gladiatorial show."—THOMSON and GEDDES, *Ideals of Faith and Science*.

HAVING stated the grounds on which the theory of evolution justifies and necessitates the acknowledgment of a teleological factor in the world of life, and the limits within which the concept works, we proceed to ask more positively in what sense the concept applies in the broader fields of Nature. Are we to limit the word to a particular theory of the rise and relations of organic beings alone, or is there a wider application of the term which includes the physical order? Has there been a preorganic evolution, and if so in what sense? Has the process a future, inclusive of that of human beings, as well?

I

We have already dealt with the teleological aspect of the modern theory of evolution in its special (i.e. its biological) aspects. This was the sphere in which the principle was first applied fruitfully and experimentally, and it is certainly the sphere in which it

first appears in such a way as to impress the ordinary mind as a valid and ascertainable fact. But the wider question will recur—whether this biological process is not a chapter in a much larger drama of progress, and it is a question to which, from our point of view as students of the Providential Order, we are bound to return. For the Providence of God—as the sphere of the divine Government—if it is a fact at all, must cover the whole drama of existence.

In the strict sense of the concept of evolution (this term and that of teleology being for our purpose practically synonymous) it can have no application to the sphere of mechanics and mechanical physics, where mere changes, that is, of quantity and position alone are concerned. The question, however, arises whether, even in this region, there may not have been a preparation for the emergence of life. For life depends on material substances for its *form*, and, as only certain forms of matter are suitable for organic purposes, it is reasonable to ask if the distribution of matter in the universe has been arranged in such a way that it should supply a favourable environment for life. Up till recently, it was taken for granted that this was not so ; but opinion has lately been growing that, at least as regards this earth, the conditions are eminently favourable for the emergence and maintenance of life. Professor Henderson of Harvard has given special attention to this subject, and in his two books *The Fitness of the Environment*,[1] and *The Order of Nature*,[2] he gives elaborate reasons for holding that the distribution of the elements on which life depends for its forms is such that it is difficult to believe that mere contingency could account for it, and that a teleological principle must have been at work. The

[1] Macmillan, 1913. [2] Ditto, 1917.

argument is too long and technical to summarise here ;[1] the sum of it is that this is an *eminently biological world*, where, long before life appeared, the conditions for its coming had been prepared with elaborate foresight and completeness. (This conclusion is all the more impressive, since the writer confesses that it was forced upon him in spite of his strong objection as a scientific man to accept the idea of teleology).

Accepting this position (at least provisionally), we are not yet at the point at which development, or epigenetic evolution, could take place. This does not happen till out of the shiftings and reactions of matter *something new* emerges, and we must pass from physics to chemistry before we come to that situation. But here the combination or regrouping of the ultimate atoms of which matter is composed so as to form new forms of matter actually takes place ; and this chemical process is intimately associated with the appearance and sustenance of life, which indeed is the best chemist we know of. And, while we do not know whether any of the heavenly bodies are inhabited, we do know that there is a form of evolution going on in this chemical sense among them, as is the case with this " homely earth " of ours. Dr. Norman Lockyer and others have demonstrated that the stars fall into groups serially related as regards the stages of their evolution, and by noting their visual *spectra* the line of preorganic evolution can be clearly traced. The controlling factor in this evolution of matter appears to be that of temperature. In the hottest stars we have matter in its simplest forms ; in the stars of medium temperature the more complex forms begin to appear ; in the coldest stars the stablest and most

[1] This will be dealt with more at large in the second volume of this work.

complex of all forms predominate, and only faint traces of the earlier remain. "Thus, if by organic evolution we mean that the vast multitudes of plants and animals as they exist to-day are not specially created, but that they have resulted from older and simpler forms, and these from simpler still . . . down to some ancient type from which they have all probably been evolved . . . so, by inorganic evolution, we mean that the eighty-odd elements of matter as we know them to-day are not specially created, but that, like animals and plants, they have truly evolved, from simpler and still simpler types, back to some really simple element from which they have all evolved through infinite æons gone by.[1] In this wonderful material universe there is thus a principle of growth and decay, and possibly of rejuvenescence, going on perpetually. The Eternal Spirit is ever at work, beginning fresh tasks, expressing His mind and will in new ways, and laying down the foundations of a process of development *here*, which has possibly been already completed *elsewhere*.

II

This at least we may predicate of the inorganic evolution of our own planet—that it is not a process complete in itself. Looking at it from the vantage-ground which we occupy as human observers, we cannot but recognise in it a preparation for something else. The process, however long it took, at last linked itself on to a higher process—that of organic evolution. In a way that is still totally mysterious and scientifically unfathomable, life made its appearance on our planet at some unknown and probably immeasur-

[1] Duncan, *The New Knowledge*, pp. 206, 207.

ably distant point of time. No one knows whether it was in the first instance a visitor from some other planet which, like a seed, found a congenial soil here, or whether it was contained implicitly in the very conditions of material evolution from the first, or whether it was "created," as between these possible alternatives there is no positive evidence which forces us to any one conclusion to the exclusion of all others. There was a time when life was not; a time came when it emerged; but what took place in this mysterious gap between the living and non-living is not, and may never become, known to us. All we need say here is that it makes no difference to our religious outlook which alternative we adopt. From a scientific standpoint it may be more satisfactory to say, with Dr. Duncan, that the "great law of continuity forbids us to assume that life suddenly made its appearance out of nothing, and tells us we must look for the element of life in the very elements of matter, for the potentiality of life should exist in every atom."[1] This comes very near Professor Tyndal's position expressed in his much-discussed address at Belfast long ago, which was then thought to be so subversive of all theistic doctrines. The panic was needless. Whether life be a potential attribute of matter, actually realised under certain favourable conditions, or a "force," or something that is neither force nor matter, but a "directive mystery" capable of using up for its ends the properties of non-living matter, is indifferent from the religious standpoint to anyone who believes that matter and force are equally derivative, and imply the

[1] Duncan, *The New Knowledge*, p. 213. This is the position elaborated from a more distinctively biological point of view by Dr. Schäfer in his Presidential Address at the Aberdeen meeting of the Royal Society, 1912. It has, however, by no means been accepted as proved by biologists universally.

action of a spiritual cause perpetually operative. The question of biogenesis or abiogenesis has indeed ceased to be a living issue to the theologian ; it is a domestic question for biologists. Of religious thinkers, it now interests only those who hold that the final proofs of the divine existence and activity are found only in the " gaps " of the physical order—a class of thinkers who represent the last flying remnants of the great army of Deists who once held so commanding a position in English thought, and whose influence has long been disastrous to its progress.

III

We now pass from the vague and indeterminate element of teleology in the inorganic world to its more clear and determinate working in the organic sphere. Here we can walk with more confident step. At least we can from the beginning recognise abundant signs of an unmistakable evolutionary process, which defines itself more and more clearly as we rise from the lowest organisms, till it finds its culmination in man, the conscious " seeker after ends " ; who, in virtue of that fact, while able to thwart the Creator in His cosmic purpose, is also capable of co-operating with Him in realising His cosmic purpose or purposes.

The first characteristic of " living " as distinguished from " non-living " matter is that it contains a self-integrative and self-formative principle. Whatever be the case with other regions of the universe, the solar system to which our earth belongs is slowly but surely dissipating its energy into space. Our own planet, for instance, is losing its central fires ; the mountains are being eroded into the valleys ; the sea will ultimately freeze in its bed ; a state of inertia will finally ensue, and life as we now know it will die out

for lack of a suitable environment—unless some inner principle of recuperation is discovered, or some fresh source of power emerges to refresh the waning forces of the physical world. That this dissipation of energy is much slower than physicists of a generation ago held to be the case is clear since the discovery of the radiant qualities of the atom ; there are hints indeed of radio-active qualities in certain other substances widely diffused through the earth's substance : here, however, we have nothing more than an element of delay in the process of disintegration. Life, alone of all the phenomena we know, is essentially *integrative* in character ; from dead matter it builds up a living organism capable for a time of resisting the active forces of decay. It works of course in dependence on the conditions of the physical order ; but within these limits it has already transformed the face of the planet from a desert into a garden, and has superimposed upon the inanimate forces on which it feeds a community of living creatures whose general characteristic is progress from simple to complex, from low to high, from monad to man. And the living world is essentially a world of " ends " : first individual, in the development and maintenance of the organism ; then serial, in the emergence and relative permanence of species ; then social, in the interdependence of individual creatures on each other ; finally conscious and spiritual in man, who can envisage " ideals " and work towards them till they are rescued from the region of phantasy, and built into the solid substance of personal and communal life.

IV

Whatever be the nature of the living principle *per se*, we know at least that it always works teleologically,

i.e. towards an end. It embodies itself in organisms, each of which represents a definite illustration of the idea of purpose. As such, we may view it from three different points of view, all converging towards the same result. As already suggested, we may in the first place deal with the *intrinsic* end of an organ—the thing for which it primarily exists, and without which it would cease to have an organic meaning. For instance, sight is the design or purpose or final end of the eye, apart from which it is a mere mass of complicated but "meaningless" matter. Or there is the *extrinsic* end which anything serves, by which is meant its uses in relation to its environment or to other entities correlated with it in a purposeful way. Nothing in Nature stands alone; it is knit into the general scheme of things, and has uses to fulfil outside itself. For instance, the petals, scent, and honeysac of a flower cannot be understood in relation to its own structure, for they are superfluities as regards the organism of which they form a part, when considered in and by itself. We cannot tell why flowers are scented or why they have highly coloured petals till we find out that most flowers can only be fructified through the agency of certain insects; and as these insects will visit flowers only for what they can get, the plants put forth certain inviting graces of colour and aroma so as to attract these insects, and they store within their inner chambers a supply of honey such as their visitors highly appreciate; so that we now know why flowers are beautiful to the eye, and fragrant to the nostrils, and full of sweetness within. We say of petals and scents that they have ends *extrinsic* to the flower, though of course vitally connected with its intrinsic end as the cradle of the seed. And there is a third sense in which the word "design" is used,

i.e. its *ultimate* end or destiny, its prophetic meaning as part of an ascending or evolving series in the general scheme of things. Is the eye evolving into a finer instrument of vision? Is the body of man completely developed, or is it something prophetic of the organic vehicle or instrument of a being (superman) greater than man himself? Or, what is man's ultimate destiny? Is he a germinal or inchoate being, a link in a series, or the proximate goal of the upward march of the organic universe?

Thus, for the *intrinsic* end of anything we look into it as a *microcosm*, as a system which so far is self-complete and finished; for its *extrinsic* end, we view it in relation to other things as part of the macrocosm; for its *ultimate* end (its true final end) we view it in relation to its future destiny, and to the destiny of the universe as a whole.

V

It is abundantly clear that, in speaking of the *intrinsic* aspects of any organism, it is a theatre of purposeful activities, and can be intelligently dealt with only as such.

Kant, who criticised the doctrine of "extrinsic" final causes so unmercifully, gives an unqualified assent to this doctrine of the inner purposefulness[1] of the organic life. Every organism, as already hinted, is a unit composed of many parts which have no significance except as subserving the ends of that organism, i.e. its well-being and efficiency as a living creature. Everything that normally happens in our bodies (even its apparently aimless restlessness) happens purposefully. This is true of the normal functions of

[1] "Innere Zweckmässigkeit."

all our organs: the stomach is for digestion; the circulation is for the distribution of vital energy, and for the repair of waste; the eye, the ear, the touch, the taste, are for their special but beautifully co-ordinated purposes. And still more astonishing is the inherent adaptability of the body to changes in the environment, or to changes in its own vital condition. When any part is hurt, there is an instant rallying of the adjacent "cells," which multiply round the wound and keep on multiplying till it is closed up. "The blacksmith's arms, the navvy's hands, the hog's snout, the pedestrian's legs, are instances of cell-growth meeting a special demand. The increased quantity of hair, fur, and feathers in animals during the winter, and the reduction of the same in summer, when such protection is unnecessary, is another case in point. Up to the limits of its vitality and its special conditions of life, there is no demand made by any part of the organism which will not be responded to."[1] Many of these changes are proleptic, or anticipatory, i.e. they take place in advance of need or function,[2] which is one of the unmistakable tests of teleological or purposive action.

So full of a manifest element of design are some of these adaptations that certain writers claim that the mutual correlations and interactions of the somatic cells—or their nerve-centres—must be endowed with a kind of intelligent consciousness of a low order, apart from the central brain intelligence of the

[1] David Syme on *The Soul*, p. 132, etc.

[2] Cf., for instance, some of the above adaptations in the natural clothing and integument of animals which come about before the cold weather sets in, or the snow appears, so that the animal is ready for the altered conditions when they arrive; and also such organic changes as take place at puberty in preparation for the function of parentage.

organism ; these lower centres of consciousness being co-ordinated by the dominating brain-centre, and the separate mental activities finally fused into a single and apparently irreducible consciousness.[1] Even the minutest cell-life displays this element of real or pseudo-intelligence and acts exactly as though it were dimly conscious of a purpose and were pursuing its ends with more or less clear intent. But it is the way in which the subordinate parts and the most diverse and apparently unrelated functions of the body are knit and welded together for the one end of conserving and developing the life of the whole organism that fills us with a sense of the controlling and directing quality of life in all its forms. The whole body is bound together and kept working harmoniously in all its parts, with one end in view—its healthful activity, and the efficient fulfilment of all its functions. Short of the limits beyond which the reserves of vitality are exhausted, and death ensues, there are no resources of ingenuity which will not be tried to repel disease, or to heal the evil effects of accident or of injurious changes in the environment. However mechanical may be the reactions which are the machineries of life, we can only speak of the changes of which the organism is the theatre in teleological terms. The purposeful control which the most skilful inventor has over the machine he has constructed is crude and clumsy compared with the delicacy and subtlety of control exercised by the " life-principle " over the physical and chemical properties of the materials which it weaves and builds up into efficient organs with their connections for its own constructive ends.

[1] See David Syme on *The Soul* (passim). A friend of the author's assures him that in a recent conversation with Edison, the great inventor elaborated a similar theory of the relation of the organs and cells of the body to the central consciousness.

The same conclusion is forced on us negatively in comparing a living organism with the same organism after the moment of decease. What is the precise physiological meaning of the fact of death is a question we have dealt with in the previous chapter; here we only add the fact that physiologically it involves the cessation of all specific teleological action in the organism. Up till that moment, all the forces resident in it were under the control of a unifying and co-ordinating principle which held them firmly together, and turned them into channels of activity having one end in view—the preservation and vital well-being of the whole organism. For this, the complicated operations of the digestive organs pursued their tortuous but beautiful courses; for this, the blood flowed, the heart beat, the sensory and efferent nerves responded to and passed on the stimulus of the environment; for this, the conscious mind attended to the warnings and suggestions of the senses, and supervised and guided the movements of the limbs; for this, innumerable unconscious adaptations were carried on in the deepest recesses of the body, and the very corpuscles of the blood waged a ceaseless defensive warfare against intruding foes. All this goes on ceaselessly so long as life continues. And what occurs at death is not that any of these complicated physical and chemical forces cease to act. They all pursue their own path, and obey their own laws as before. Not a single "particle" of force is destroyed; there is no pause in the process of the conservation and transmutation of energy in the physical tissues of the body. But the character of that process has now altogether changed, because of the disappearance of that mysterious guiding and co-ordinating principle which had hitherto held them under control and

directed them hither and thither for its own ends. Thus the body which had for the period of its whole existence been *one* thing, begins at once to fall to pieces and to become many things, being rapidly resolved into its component elements, till it completely loses its identity, and is merged into the environment out of which it had been built up. That is to say, in place of the *in*tegrating activity which is everywhere one of the *differentiæ* of life, the *dis*integrating activity of the inorganic universe resumes its sway. Or, to put it into words that mean the same thing, the *special* end for which the body had existed having been attained, the materials it had utilised for its purpose are handed over to the forces of the environment for use in other directions and for other ends.

Two important qualifying remarks are called for here :

1. It is desirable to point out that this inner purposive element in the sphere of life is none the less real, so far as it goes, because it is governed by the process called " natural selection." All that the group of destructive forces included under that name can do is to weed out the organisms whose purposive function is less efficiently performed than that of other organisms better equipped for their end. Even if we say that each body is in itself the theatre of internal struggle, we are still faced with the fact that the struggle is between a guiding or integrating principle on the one side and certain disintegrating tendencies on the other ; and even the disintegrating principle may be but a part of a larger guiding principle in the cosmos generally, whose end is none the less served because it is gained at the expense of particular organisms which have fulfilled their functions in the general scheme. Natural Selection cannot account

for the existence of any constructive fact or group of facts in organic life; it can only act on them once they exist, and give them a place in preference to other competing facts, or remove them if less adapted to their environment. The intrinsic purposefulness of individual organisms, and of species of organisms, is thus untouched by any true theory of Natural Selection. It can never be spoken of as an *originative* force; it accounts only for the destruction of the "unfit" in favour of the fit, i.e. of those organisms and species that fulfil their purposive function most efficiently.

2. Secondly, we must be careful to remember that, by the teleological feature of all organic life, we do not mean the working out of an effort on the part of the organisms *knowingly directed to its end. Pace* Mr. Syme, we cannot believe that the stomach works in *conscious* co-operation with the blood-vessels or even the brain, nor do the cells which rally together round an injury with a view to healing the damage take counsel together and subdivide the work between them like a break-down gang of workmen clearing away the wreckage caused by a railway collision. Even the central consciousness is totally unaware of what goes on in the process of growth and repair in our own bodies; there is, at least in ordinary life, a gap between the conscious ego and the vital processes of the organism in this respect. Not only does the seed develop in the earth in a way which the husbandman who has planted it cannot (and need not) understand,[1] but our own bodies grow in a secret and mysterious manner which is none the less efficient because we are totally

[1] "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, *he knoweth not how*. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself" (Mark iv. 28).

unconscious, or at least but dimly conscious of its *modus operandi*. It would seem true that, the healthier and the more normal our physical growth and life, the more thoroughly unconscious we are of it.

In what sense, then, do we mean that there is an *intrinsic* purposefulness in all vital processes? In this—that, just as the parts of a machine work unconsciously (but no less efficiently for that reason) in perfect co-ordination towards the end for which it was constructed, the only seat of consciousness being the mind of the constructor who devised it, and of the engineer who guides it, so the bodies of all living creatures work for their vital ends unconsciously, but *as though guided and controlled by some higher intelligence*. And while it is true of a machine that, the more perfectly it has been planned and constructed, the more automatic and independent is it in its working, and the less prominent does the guiding and superintending element appear, this does not in any way detract from the fact that the whole contrivance is essentially purposeful, but rather proves that fact more thoroughly and illustrates it more beautifully. Similarly the automatic reactions and unconscious adaptations which go on in the vital economy, the more perfectly they fulfil their purpose, do not detract from their teleological characters. Thus, once more, we come upon the truth that the mechanical and teleological explanations of organic life are seen to be, not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary. The complete explanation of both a machine and an organism demands, first, an exposition of the mechanical arrangements, and, secondly, of the design or final end for which they were constructed. So with the universe of matter and life and sentiency.

VI

When we pass from the consideration of the *intrinsic teleological* factor in living organisms to what we have called the element of *extrinsic* design in the cosmos, we enter a region where our foothold is far less certain, and where mistakes are easy to make.

That certain facts and relations in organic nature are specially correlated is indeed obvious to a little careful observation. Everyone is now familiar with a fact already referred to—the close relationship between certain flowers and insects, where formation is controlled by the fact that each depends so largely on the other for its well-being ; the insects depending on the supply of pollen and honey secreted by the flowers, and the latter depending on the visits of their appropriate insects for the process of cross-fertilisation on which the vigour, and in many cases the continuance, of their propagative power hangs. In Darwin's *Fertilisation of Orchids* superabundant proofs are given of the ingenious and far-reaching working of this principle of interdependence of organ and function among living beings, both in the vegetable and animal worlds. But there is a very much wider application of this principle The organs of animals generally are adapted to the conditions of their environment with a view to the better realisation of their vital purposes. The double stomach of certain ruminants, the capacity of the camel to carry a store of water for gradual consumption on desert journeys, the particular form of the teeth, claws, tails, and other organs of animals which fit them for their special habitats, together with innumerable other adaptations of organic life, while in one sense they are intrinsically purposive, would fail to be of any use

were they not extrinsically adapted to something in their environment. A word of caution, however, is here needed.

The temptation is so strong, in the uneducated mind, to discover all kinds of ingenious and far-reaching correlations and mutual dependencies between coincident facts in the cosmos that it is easy to fall into extravagant and ludicrous mistakes in this direction; indeed it is because of the riotous way in which theologians and religiously minded people generally have allowed their fancy to work on this subject, finding all manner of fanciful correlations in Nature, and "special providences" in their own experience, that many thoughtful minds have turned away in disgust from the teleological view of life, and have fallen into negative extravagancies on the other side. We shall do well to avoid both extremes, and steer a middle course between the Scylla of credulity and the Charybdis of scepticism. As Hegel wittily observes, because cork makes excellent stoppers for champagne bottles, we must not infer that Nature grew cork-trees *in order* to provide corks. At the same time it cannot be *meaningless* that cork makes good stoppers! It is a proof that the universe is a *system* with innumerable possible as well as actual interrelationships between its parts. It seems to be man's peculiar function to discover many correspondencies between phenomena not at first perceptible, and to bring about many fresh correspondencies by discovery and invention, which were always implicit, and which it is his business to make actual for his own purposes. So among many other adaptations he makes stoppers for bottles out of cork, because its qualities are peculiarly suitable for that purpose.

It is, however, perfectly legitimate for us to affirm

that nothing in Nature is complete in itself, and that everything has some end or ends to serve in relation to its environment. It is possible to isolate the law of cause and effect in a manner that has no parallel in the objective world. Haeckel's dictum that there is no chance in sequences, while there is nothing but chance in coincidences; i.e. that "nothing is chance vertically, and that everything is chance laterally," is the result of a false abstraction. When two arms of a cantilever bridge in process of construction gradually approach each other till they touch in the middle and are riveted together, there is no mechanical line of causation between the approaching parts; yet no one who has a knowledge of the whole situation ever thinks of their final coincidence as a matter of chance or accident. Why not? Because we infer from our knowledge of the circumstances that there is a *mind* at work both in the plan and the construction of the bridge, and that the final joining up of the parts was intended from the beginning. When two series of events join up in Nature, and out of their coincidence certain remarkable and quite rational results come to pass, why are we forbidden to make the same teleological inference? If we had a perfect knowledge of all the antecedents beforehand, and were aware of all their hidden implications, we should be able to foretell the coincidence and its meaning as clearly as we now may be able to foretell the result of each constituent operation in the above instance, and the word "chance" would be banished from our vocabulary as "a picturesque name for human ignorance." All the facts and events in Nature are interrelated into a system which has lateral as well as serial significance. True, our special faculties seem capable of isolating and so of understanding the serial (causative) more easily than

the lateral (coincident) aspects of the system, but this is a comparative, not a final inhibition ; and, as time goes on, and " knowledge grows from more to more," the extrinsic purpose of all things may become as clear to us as their intrinsic meaning.

VII

What, finally, of the *ultimate* end of organic life ?

Returning for a moment to the point already touched upon in an earlier paragraph, we find that the unique thing we call life is an integrative entity, while " matter " is an entity in a state of disintegration like a " clock running down " ; and that life takes certain forms of this disintegrating matter and builds it up into individual organic forms which it uses for its own purposive ends. When we study these organic forms we find that they are grouped into genera and species in infinite variety, and that through these groups there runs a line of development in a certain definite way. In this line the *élan vital*, or " vital push," works towards ever greater freedom from the inhibitions and determinations of the physical order. As life rises in complexity of form, it tends more and more towards spontaneity of movement, and to mastery of its environment in the interests of the organism. As it does so, it comes into organic touch with higher and richer elements in the environment, and develops new organs as instruments for handling and mastering these higher elements. *Pari passu* with this process we find that mind, feeling, and will—the psychological aspects of organic life—develop in vividness and range. At a certain point life becomes conscious, and later still it becomes self-conscious ; i.e. certain organisms appear that are not only aware of their

surroundings, but are *aware* that they are aware. For purposes of free handling of the environment this is a step of quite incalculable importance. It enables the organism to make use of the *past* in a new way. Hitherto, its relations with the environment were still of a *quasi*-mechanical kind ; the purposive element in life acted unconsciously, or semiconsciously at best ; the factors at work were the action of the environment plus that of heredity plus the vital push in the central path of evolution. But now the organism has been able to gather up the data of experience consciously with a view to further mastery of the environment. It also enabled the organism to deal with its *present* relations with the environment in a new way, and, by conscious use of its faculties, to build up a system of knowledge which meant *power* of control through fresh adaptations, and the making of tools which involved an immense extension of power and freedom. And finally it enabled the organism to face the future in a wholly new attitude, being now capable of forming conscious purposes, and of conceiving ideals ; so that progress is no longer a vague and indeterminative movement—a *vis a tergo*—but a *vis a fronte*, an inner determination of life in response to an ideal not yet realised. This is what the arrival of man on this planet meant from the biological and psychological point of view. For untold ages life had been struggling with the organism in which it was at first imprisoned, and by the limitations of the environment by which it was conditioned, and it has at last so far mastered both that they have become plastic in its hands. When we rise into the ethical and spiritual region further vistas begin to open out ; new achievements become possible, new hopes are born ; and all the potentialities of personality are awakened. When these have

been realised the final end of creation will be reached, and the long story of the Providential Order will be complete.

Looking back along this far-reaching process and forward towards its ideal climax, is it any longer possible to doubt that it is the fruit of a teleological plan, and that a purposive Mind and Will have been at work? Was not John Fiske right when, in his book on *Man's Destiny viewed in the light of his Origin*, he spoke of the "dramatic movement" in Nature, which finds its climax in man, in whom the physical series finds its final form, and a fresh line of evolution is started into regions as yet only prophetically suggested? It is perfectly true, as the biologist and physicist point out, that the mechanism which has enabled this result to be brought about is growing clear to us; but that only touches the outer fringe of the problem. So can the story of the evolution of a great invention (such as wireless telephony) be traced from its faint beginnings to its final form. Does that prove that the invention is the result of a series of chance events, or the mere interworking of purely mechanical forces without a creative and purposive mind to initiate and superintend the movements of these forces to a desired end? On the contrary, we know that the formative principle of every mechanical invention was more or less present in some inventor's mind before it was started, and without which it would never have been made at all. Is it not equally clear that, while the mechanism of the vita series was partly at least implicit in the primal star-mist, we must posit the existence and activity of the Creative Mind to account for the evolutionary process which has moved with so steady a step to its consummation in man?

We thus conclude that the theory of evolution provides the final proof and illustration of the presence of a "telic" principle in the universe; that it is the last link in a chain of argument which becomes at last complete and coercive. Religious minds may be truly grateful to biological science for this final contribution to the theological conception of the universe. Like Balaam on Mount Peor, it set out about the middle of last century if not to curse, at least to pour contempt on such a conception, and to deny all teleological activity in the cosmos; it has lingered, at first a little unwillingly, but no less surely, to bless it, and we may humbly hope *it will remain to worship*.

BOOK III

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

" Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On Joy, solely to find and feast;
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end of men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?"

BROWNING.

CHAPTER I

EVIL AS LIMITATION AND ERROR

IT is a commonplace that much confusion of thought is due to ambiguities of language; and there are few words which have contributed so much painful confusion and so many illogical deductions as the term "Evil." In its general untechnical meaning it is used to denote anything that is unpleasant or painful to the feelings, or inimical to any human interests [1]—a sense so wide and vague, and covering so many distinctions of thought, that until these are clearly distinguished, it is useless to argue about it. In its application to our particular inquiry, indeed, we can distinguish three connotations of the word which are so distinct that they require careful and precise handling. These are—*Evil as Limitation*, *Evil as Error*, *Evil as Suffering* in its proper sense, and *Evil as Sin*. Each of these facts has a distinct bearing on the general problem of Providence viewed in its theocratic aspects, and it will be necessary to give them patient and earnest consideration—all the more so as they are inextricably intermingled in human experience.

I

We begin our inquiry by considering what we have called *Evil as Limitation*.

[1] Cf. Job ii. 10: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

By this we mean those painful pressures of experience involved in the inequalities and contrasts of human life, against which the modern mind rebels with ever-increasing emphasis, but which arise from the very constitution of the universe. This is a world in which we are hemmed in by innumerable limitations which hamper the soul in its efforts after self-realisation. There is a great disparity between the subjective demands of our nature and our objective opportunities of satisfaction. Human desire is illimitable in its scope, and insatiable in its appetite; while life is a thin rivulet of realisation running through a tangled and resistant wilderness of circumstance. Our thoughts run back into the illimitable past, and forward into the illimitable future, while our experience is imprisoned in the hour. We cannot reverse time's order and recover for one moment the treasures of yesterday; nor can we hasten it, and so anticipate to-morrow's joy. All this, to a creature of such omnivorous psychic appetite as man, often appears as an evil and undesirable fact. We are, further, hedged in by conditions of space and locality, and, in any given situation, we possess only a fraction of the possibilities of our life. These limitations affect all created beings equally, but, while the lower creatures seem unconscious of their sting, Man, who has "eternity in his heart," finds them ever more acute as his nature expands. Our intellectual and spiritual hunger indeed seems to increase with our growth, while our chances of satisfaction appear to remain stagnant. It is the greatest men who feel most keenly this painful contrast between their ideal possibilities and their actual experience. The soul demands a universe for its satisfaction, and is tied to a planet as its lot. This longing for a richer and ampler life grows all the more

painful when we consider the brevity of our days. One-third of our time is taken in arriving at our physical maturity; mentally we do not reach our prime till two-thirds of our span of existence is reached; we have scarcely attained to spiritual maturity before the walls of our prison-house begin to contract, and old age mocks our ideals with its diminishing vistas and its inevitable grave.

In addition to these universal limitations, which afflict all humanity alike, there are innumerable limitations arising out of the inequalities of our lot in life. Men are not born equal, nor are they born into equally advantageous surroundings, nor do they pass through an equal richness of experience. The few come into life dowered with large powers, and blessed with initial advantages of disposition and temperament; others are cursed with congenital disabilities, or find themselves hampered by circumstances which give them no chance to realise such abilities as they possess; others are followed from the cradle to the grave by untoward happenings and recurrent misfortunes. Who can harmonise the contrast in the lot of a slum-child with that of a scion of one of our noble families, or even of a comfortable middle-class home? How many among the dim multitudes peopling our congested areas have a real chance to "come to their own" under the paralysing conditions of their lot? It may indeed be said of many born in the lap of luxury that they are hampered by some congenital defect, and, if so, how much more so are those obstructed and hemmed in who are not so much born as "damned" into the horror of a drunkard's home in Poplar or the Canongate? The easy optimism which holds that there are always compensating elements in every life which neutralise these undeniable contrasts of human experience

draws too large a cheque on the bank of faith. These anomalies are real, and cannot be explained away.

Another form of this "evil" in human life is the "contingency" of experience, i.e. that element of chance [1] and change which so often crosses our path, disturbing the current of our purposes, and often vitally affecting our destiny. We literally know not what a day may bring forth in any life. We lay our plans for the future on the assumption that in the ordinary course of events we shall be able to carry them out; but who shall guarantee that the best of them may not be brought to an untoward end through some sudden and unforeseen influence or event? The farmer is at the mercy of an inclement season; the sailor is liable to storms, collisions, shipwrecks; the traveller to accidents due to causes beyond foresight or control, such as sudden sickness on the part of an overworked signalman, the explosion of a cylinder, or the snapping of a tie-rod; the business man to alternations of trade, rising or falling markets, and other contingencies. In a world traversed by so many intercrossing forces, each following out its destined pathway irrespective of immediate interests and

[1] By chance here is not meant happenings which have no "law" or sufficient reason, but such events as do not appear to have any causal or rational relation to our individual lot, which nevertheless affect our lives for good or evil. Absolute chance is of course absolute nonsense, and relative chance is not really chance at all; yet there are events which affect us as though, *so far as we are concerned*, they were "unrelated happenings." Some of these events are the results of the physical world-process; others are the acts of other persons which are performed without any intention of producing their actual social effects. It is to such facts in life that this section refers. That they form no inconsiderable part of life's experiences we all know—often to our bitter cost. Much of the discontent that fills so many lives is due to their effects on our lot and happiness. (See Ward's *Realm of Ends*, Note I, pp. 454, 455.)

desires, it is often impossible to foretell their action or calculate their mutual effects on our lives; and it is through a tangle of such happenings, any of which may interfere with or stultify our personal plans, that we have to steer our perilous and uncertain way. Sometimes these forces combine favourably and waft us to our port, at other times they seem to conspire in driving us on the rocks. Finally, even the best and most fortunate of men live perpetually under the uncertain shadow of death, which comes to men with sure but uneven foot; so that none of us can say with any certainty that we shall see to-morrow's sun.

II

In earlier times men accepted these limitations and inequalities with a certain stoicism which had its noble side, but, as has been suggested, this acquiescent mood has passed away, and the modern spirit is up in arms against the universe. It is no longer possible to lull the mutterings of spiritual revolt by complaisant words concerning the inscrutableness of the divine will, and by affirming its right to make "one vessel to honour and another to dishonour."[1] Ever since the time of Job (and doubtless much earlier) the soul has been gradually awakening to the poignancy of the riddle of life's bitter contrasts and contingencies; and the answers of the past no longer suffice to meet the more radical and imperious questionings of to-day. Contentment under the worst or even the lesser disabilities of our lot has ceased to be thought a virtue; men rise in wrath against a system that seems to be based on a principle of individual as well as social injustice, and turn to Omar Khayyám rather than to

[1] Rom. ix. 21.

St. Paul as the exponent of their attitude towards the universe. It is not enough to indict Society as the culprit against whom the individual cursed by multifarious disabilities has a right to complain; however many of these disabilities may be traceable to that source, there are others that appear to be ingrained in the nature of things, and many boldly demand that the Maker and Ruler of all should give an account of Himself to the creature of His hands. It would appear, at least *prima facie*, that in a world governed by righteous love, every individual soul should have an equal initial equipment and an equal opportunity of realising its possibilities. Is God not omnipotent, or not good, that it should be so manifestly otherwise?

Such is the problem we have now to face. It is manifestly one that emerges only on a Christian theory of the universe; it is one of the penalties of faith in a God of goodness and love; the facts are the same for all, but they only become a moral difficulty for believers, and it is because of their insistence that so many tender and earnest souls find a Christian theory of the world so difficult to accept. If the universe be a mere soulless machine, directed by no intelligent purpose, guided to no spiritual end, controlled by no just and loving will, there is nothing more to be said—things are as they are, and must be faced as best we may; but, if an intelligent faith is to be maintained in the essential goodness of God, it is imperative that some light should be shed on the problem that confronts us here with so forbidding an aspect, and which makes so imperious a demand on our faith.

III

1. We will begin our constructive argument with the affirmation that some such problem as this would

emerge in any conceivable universe that was not entirely chaotic or absolutely static.

Whether the universe in which we find ourselves is the only possible universe, or one out of many that might have been created, would seem an idle question, since we have no means of solving it ; all we know with certainty is that things are as they are. Let us, however, allow for the sake of argument that this is only one out of an inconceivable number of possible universes. Our contention is that *in each and all of them we should be faced with the problem which we have to face in this one.* For in the very nature of things a determinate universe must have a constitution, and, if it is an orderly and self-consistent system, there must be in it a principle of less and more ; of here and there ; of before and after ; i.e. of many real, and of still more apparent, inequalities. Unless indeed it were an entirely static and motionless, and therefore non-progressive universe, incapable of producing or achieving anything—a bare actuality without any unrealised possibilities whatever within its blank and monotonous boundaries ! In such a system there could not be movement of any kind ; it would have no history, for there would be no change in it ; and manifestly it could never become the arena for the emergence of such creatures as we are. And if, eschewing such an alternative, we still say the universe as we find it is not the only possible one, and certainly not the best conceivable,we are embarking on a speculation so vast and complicated that, the further we pursue it, the less likely are we to come to a definite conclusion. Whatever this conclusion might be, however, we insist on the fact that a determinate universe of any kind could not escape the indictment in some form or other that it would involve limitations

the same in kind if not in degree as those that afflict humanity in the world that now is.[1]

1. Let us, then, consider the actual universe for a moment, in its general features. It has, in the first place, a definite constitution, being composed of certain physical elements having fixed and infinitely varied properties, disposed unequally in space, and evolving in a serial order of events in time. In its earlier stages, so far as we can recover the record, it would appear to have been less differentiated than it is at present. In other words, it is a universe orderly in its general character, and evolving into a condition of ever-increasing differentiation and instability. In its present stage it is a system of almost inconceivable complexity, involving many apparent anomalies. That this complexity is not a mere chaotic multiplicity we have already seen reason to believe ; it is a multiplicity evolved in the gradual realisation of a plan, and moving towards an end, and this end is one that may be at least provisionally described as beneficent. Manifestly, therefore, the details of the process cannot be fairly evaluated except in the light of that end. At their worst, therefore, the inequalities presented to us in experience are not hopeless or unrelieved evils ; they find a place in the movement of the universe to a consummation which may yet prove to be one most "devoutly to be wished."

2. If limitation and contingency are thus inalienable elements in an orderly universe, it is also true that our *own constitution as human beings is manifestly fitted for encountering these elements in actual experience.*

[1] "The contingency in the world, of which physical evil is a part, cannot be construed into a sign of moral imperfection in its constitution : such contingency is inseparable from any creation that is evolutionary in such wise as to leave free agents more or less initiative" (Ward's *Realm of Ends*, p. 379).

Apart from them we should never realise any of our possibilities as self-conscious creatures; we should never, indeed, become self-conscious at all. Without subscribing unreservedly to the doctrine that all consciousness would be impossible except through the "friction" between the mind and its environment, we must recognise as a fact of experience that we do actually come to know ourselves through the "relation" between our organism and its surroundings, and this relation is one partly of correspondence and partly of inhibition or resistance. The objective element in experience, in other words, is necessary to the subjective; and while they are both *within* the circle of experience, they are unified only by a process of conflict and assimilation. More than this can be said—just as the sea breaks into finest splendour where it flings its waves against a rock-bound shore, so consciousness is most vivid at its fringe of contact with a resistant environment. True, there is another and deeper kind of consciousness which comes through the retroversion of the mind into its own inner depths in mystic contemplation; but it is questionable whether even this is possible except as a return from the fretful and exhausting play of the mind on the thwarting elements in the foreground of experience. Further, the total environment includes other minds than our own which are also partly co-operant and partly resistant; and it is now universally allowed that the friction of our social relations is an essential condition for the attainment of our sense of self-identity at the outset, and for full self-realisation as the final end of our existence as individuals. It is thus clear that the limitations of human life, against which we are so apt to gird, are necessary for the development of the self which resists them, and which in resisting

and overcoming them arrives at the fullness of its own inner life.

3. The value of limitations and difficulties as conditions of realising our individual subjective possibilities *is also true of our objective life as a race of evolving creatures.* If the recent speculations regarding the conditions which governed the period when the man-like ape became the ape-like man in the well-wooded regions of central Asia are true, we have abundant proof of the crucial value of the law of limitation in furthering the process of human evolution. A time came in that region, when a slow but radical change took place in the environment, and incipient man found himself in a sad quandary. A profound climatic change caused the forest-lands to dwindle and perish. His " natural " habitat became uninhabitable for him as an arboreal creature, and he had perforce to come to the ground. For this his previous life had by no means fitted him. He was almost defenceless against the enemies which he found prowling round him ; his food became scarce and difficult to obtain ; he was, in a word, flung on his wits for his subsistence. Three advantages alone he possessed ; but they were sufficient for the situation. He had an enormous brain as the organ of his mind ; he had a hand which was capable of being turned to many fresh uses ; and he had become capable of an upright stance. How these had been evolved no one knows ; they were probably the result of some more or less sudden " mutation " handed down through heredity under unknown conditions. But there they were, ready to be used ; and, " necessity being laid upon him," he used them in such a way that he not only survived the inclemencies of his situation, but developed unsuspected capacities for terrestrial life, and in the course of time

became the man of to-day, with his wonderful control over his environment, his marvellous internal resources of thought, and his social life. If we may parallel his first attitude towards his changed circumstances by the attitude of most men to-day in similar plight, he must have rebelled strongly against his position. None the less, the unhappy fate that had overtaken him was the one condition under which alone his capacities for development could be fulfilled; and thus what at first seemed the end of all things for him became the means whereby he was able to realise his potential capacities for survival and progress. Could we have a finer illustration of the fact that our well-being as a race and as individuals does not depend on having things all "our own way," but that the stresses and misfortunes of our mortal life, if accepted and surmounted with unconquerable courage, endurance and resourcefulness, are the very conditions under which we are best able to "rise on stepping-stones of our dead selves to higher things"?

4. That human nature is organically fitted to a world of limitations is so clear that it *is felt necessary to the training of the young to increase rather than decrease the restrictions imposed by natural law,* in the interests of their true development of character. Family and school training are based on the fact that children need not only instruction and stimulus, but discipline, control, and leadership during the years of growth. Spoiling children simply means "giving them their own way" too much. For many, the hardest upbringing is the best; few of those who are surrounded by luxury in their young days put forth their best possibilities in later life. "Self-discipline" is simply the recognition of the fact that the world within must also be brought under subjection, and

that many of our native impulses must be denied in the interests of our higher nature if we are to rise to the heights of personality. Even the world of sport illustrates the same principle. All games are based on strict rules in order to make skill difficult, and the reward of success worth fighting for; and obedience to these rules is hedged round with a "code of honour" which is the finest test of sportsmanship on its subjective side. Half the joy of a career in life is found in accepting and mastering the social and other hindrances which confront the aspirant; success and fame are measured for the most part by the courage and resourcefulness with which these hindrances are met and surmounted. The fact that the spiritual life is throughout a struggle with fears within and foes without, is a condition for calling forth the noblest qualities, without which *character* in its finest possibilities would be unattainable. "No cross, no crown." The unique homage felt for Jesus Christ is due to the fact that He "trod the winepress alone," and that, with the whole forces of the world arrayed against Him, He overcame them by the simple majesty of His goodness.

5. May we not go a step further, and say that the Creator and Sustainer of all things is "limited" by the constitution of the universe which He has made for His own great ends? There has, indeed, been much foolish talk about the omnipotence and freedom of God in His government of the world—as though, having chosen the kind of universe He would make, He could then do as He liked with it. As a matter of fact, God is bound by the principle of self-consistency: He "cannot deny Himself." In this sense, creation means self-limitation; as the theologians phrase it, it is a true "kenosis," involving restrictions

of method and action which limit the divine procedure within certain lines. It is part of the Christian Faith that since God has chosen, for divinely wise and good reasons, the particular type of universe in which we find ourselves, involving the elements of contingency, suffering, and even possible sin, He shares the travail and sorrow of His creatures as well as their joys, "is afflicted in their afflictions," and "bears and carries them all their days" on a heart of sympathy and love, compared with which our deepest sympathy with one another is but a dull and shallow sentiment. That is the principle underlying our Lord's simple but arresting words—"not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father"[1]—a principle which carries us far if we follow it into all its implications. Nothing can happen to us, according to the Christian Faith, whether it be joy or sorrow—good fortune or ill, but He shares it with us, entering with flawless and kindly sympathy into all the throbbing experiences of His children. Into whatever extravagances the doctrine of the Divine Immanence may have led unwary thinkers, it cannot mean less than that. If the evolution of the universe through tragedy into triumph does not and cannot imply or involve the evolution of God, it can and does imply the closest relation between Him and the struggles, disasters, sorrows, victories, and rejoicings of His evolving creatures; and in this we find the corrective of that remnant of Deism which still clings to men's thoughts concerning Him, and rouses so many to cry out against the Being who having made them for His own inscrutable purpose, appears to leave them to a pitiful and uncertain fate, while He enjoys His own blessedness in the calm and unapproachable aloofness of His being.

[1] Matt. x. 29.

IV

There are other considerations which help to modify our natural revolt against the limitations of life.

1. For instance, if the inequalities and instabilities of life are sources of puzzlement and disappointment to most of us, they constitute from another point of view that *element of plot-interest and stimulus to effort* which is one of the most fascinating features of experience. This is confessedly a perilous and uncertain world for us all; but to beings constituted normally as we are, is this not one of the most educative and quickening aspects of life? If the sentimentalists and humanitarians who indict the order of Providence because it involves so many incidental contingencies, disabilities, and tragedies had their own way, this universe would doubtless be well padded with cotton-wool; it would have no inequalities, no accidents, no baffling events in its history; but would it not for that very reason lose its chief charm for natures like ours? In his *Talks on Psychology, and Life's Ideals*, William James describes a visit he once paid to an assembly of students on the borders of Chautauqua Lake. There he found himself in a paradise of orderliness and ideality, prosperity, and cheerfulness such as our modern civilisation dreams of when shaping its ideal world—" a foretaste, in short, of what human society and the world would be were it all in the light, with no suffering and no corners." Having stayed happily for a week in these idyllic surroundings, with its model schools, its " perpetually running soda-water fountains," its best of company, its freedom from zymotic diseases, poverty, drunkenness, crime, and police, its kindness and its equality, he was surprised on his departure to find himself unexpectedly and

involuntarily glad to get back to the "dark and wicked world again," with "its heights and depths, its precipices and steep ideals, its gleams of the awful and the infinite in which there was more hope and help a thousand times than in this dead level and quintessence of mediocrity." On analysing his feelings, he found himself realising that what was lacking in the "Sabbatic City" by the lake-side was that "element which gives to the outer wicked world its moral style, expressiveness, and picturesqueness—the element of precipitousness, so to call it, of strength and strenuousness, intensity and danger. What excites and interests the lookers-on at life, what the romances and the statues celebrate, and the grim civic monuments remind us of, is the everlasting battle between the powers of light and darkness; with heroism reduced to its bare chance, yet ever and anon snatching victory from the jaws of death. . . . Sweat and effort, human nature strained to its uttermost and on the rack, yet getting through alive, and then turning its back on its success to pursue another more rare and arduous still—this is the sort of thing the presence of which inspires us, and the reality of which it seems to be the function of all the higher forms of literature and fine art to bring home to us and to suggest." [1] In this passage one of the most virile of modern writers recalls the soft and decadent temper of our times back to the fact that the universe as we find it is exactly the one best fitted to our fundamental and essential nature. It is a universe of danger and opportunity, of forlorn hopes and imminent perils and doubtful chances, and as such it is a true arena

[1] Loc. cit., pp. 268–73. The whole address on "What makes life significant" is well worth studying from the point of view of this chapter.

in which the soul of man, with its spiritual possibilities and unrealised powers, can best enjoy itself, as well as arrive at its true stature. The modern revolt against the instabilities of life is thus no valid indictment against the conditions of existence; it is rather an indication of a degenerate spirit, and of a slackening fibre in men's notion of what life should be. For, as we have just seen, it is in the watchfulness and enterprise, the daring and the courage, the resourcefulness and discipline called forth by the very limitations against which we gird to-day that the race in the past has realised such greatness as it has attained, the fruits of which we inherit. Progress in the future will equally depend on a return to a healthier attitude and a more strenuous temper. The battle is still to the strong, and the race to the swift. It is such who discover that most of the limitations of life are not unyielding barriers, not the adamantine walls of a prison-house, but permeable obstacles, by attacking which with dour courage and inexhaustible will the soul is strengthened as well as fascinated, enriched as well as tested. The pathway of courage has already been blazed through an apparently impenetrable forest of difficulties, and many blind alleys had to be traversed before the way out was discovered; but the struggle has at least ended in developing those "wrestling thews that throw the world," which are man's noblest equipment for the conquest of his own undisciplined nature as well. *Sic itur ad astra!*

2. Finally, it is well to remember that the element of contingency is after all not a fundamental but a secondary aspect of experience. There is enough of it to induce a feeling of uncertainty, even a sense of jeopardy, into the stablest and least adventurous human life, so that we are never permitted to sink

into a permanent condition of security, much less of lethargy, without certain disaster to follow; but there is not enough to introduce an element of permanent confusion into human life as a whole. The perpetual changes and chances of our environment, taken together, only suffice to stimulate the race, especially the more progressive section of it, to continual watchfulness and unending endeavour—qualities that lie at the root of progress, without which we should soon sink into decadence, and finally into ruin. History speaks with no uncertain voice of the perils of that condition of long-continued security and " well-being " to which in favoured ages certain races have attained; and the same is true of classes and individuals in society. We are so constituted that physical and spiritual health is attainable by us only under conditions that make a ceaseless appeal to our active nature, and force us to seek a continuous adjustment to an ever-shifting environment. The great races of the world, which have most thoroughly realised their possibilities, have been those in whose history the element of contingency has been most prominent; who have had to do battle with watchful enemies along their borders, and to fight with uncertainties of climate and weather and disease; who have been periodically driven forth by pressure of population to seek new homes in far wildernesses, across steep mountains, and over stormy seas; who have suffered again and again from invasion and conquest and internal revolutions—who yet have proved strong enough to rise to these great occasions, and have been disciplined into greatness by tragic experiences of stress and struggle. This is specially so with the races who have been the channels of spiritual progress. Of them it may be said, without exception, that their

periods of creative faith have coincided with, or followed, times of severe turmoil and even of national disaster. Pre-eminently is this true of the people of Israel. That nation was disciplined for its supreme task by arduous struggles and perpetual spiritual dislodgments, and did not rise to the highest realisation of its religious function till it was several times broken on the wheel of destiny, and scattered broadcast by repeated defeats and captivities. The prophet Jeremiah seems to have some such thought in his mind in his references to the contrast between the fate of Israel and of Moab: "Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity; therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed." Doubtless many a harassed Israelite must have envied that feckless people securely hidden in its remote valleys at times when his own nation, insecurely lodged on the great "land-bridge" between Assyria and Babylon on the one side and the mighty empire of Egypt on the other, was often ground between these great rivals as between the upper and nether millstone, or was being poured from one captivity to another. Nevertheless, the security of the one race proved its doom, and the insecurity of the other its highest opportunity; for it was out of the complete failure of Israel's political ambitions, and the ruin of its national hopes, that it rose into spiritual greatness, and became the (often unwilling) medium of the highest spiritual revelation made to mankind. It would thus seem that the soul of man, equally with his body, needs an environment in unstable equilibrium in order to be quickened and maintained in vigour; that the highest Good can only be found by seeking

it as for hid treasure, and following it as a forlorn hope.[1] So great a function have the insecurities of life filled in the upward life of the race that we may confidently say that without them there would have been no progress, that humanity would probably have long since fallen into a state of ignoble decadence, and that possibly it would already have gone the way of the mastodon and the dinosaur.

V

There is one direction, however, in which these considerations do not seem to apply.

One of the great gifts of the Christian Faith to the ethical life is the principle that each individual soul is an "end in itself" for God as well as for Man; that is to say, it is an entity so sacred that it can never be dealt with as a mere "means to an end" outside itself. If the Gospel of Jesus is true, we cannot conceive even the Creator sacrificing the ultimate interests of a single individual soul to those of the universe at large, much less to those of the nation or community to which it "belongs." However right it may be to speak of divine ends being realised "through" individuals, even at the expense of their suffering and death, we cannot speak rightly of a single soul being sacrificed as regards its ultimate destiny for ends in which it can have no part or lot. This principle has become axiomatic in all the higher systems of ethics, and it is central to any Christian scheme of thought and life. However imperfectly this has become incorporated into the political and social institutions of modern civilisation, it is not too

[1] See on this subject Horace Bushnell's great sermon on "Spiritual Dislodgments," in his volume *The New Life*, where he develops this thesis at length (cheap ed., 1861, Sampson, Low, Son & Co., pp. 292 ff.).

much to say that it has been the animating principle of all truly progressive movements in recent times, and that it is the essential condition of making any further progress. The remarkable extension of liberties in the modern State, the gradual emancipations of the masses from the deadening thraldoms of earlier times, the educational and social expansions of our own day, have all flowed from a sense of the unconditional value of the individual, and of the rights that follow the recognition of that fundamental ethical principle.

The trouble is that while this is clearly a postulate of the Christian view of life, it does not seem to find a place in the cosmic process, so far as that can be understood by us. In the complicated streams of influence which surge around us in the slow movement of the universe, the interests of the individual—even his highest interests—seem to be at the mercy of every changeful chance. The forces that produce us often appear to crush us with impartial blindness to our fate. True (as already pointed out), the fact that the environment contains favourable conditions to which we can successfully adapt ourselves proves that in the last resort it is friendly and not unfriendly to us. But—and this is our trouble—while this is true of the mass, it is not equally true of all individuals who have to take their chance of survival in the general *mêlée*. It would seem, therefore, that the Christian religion has discovered for man a principle of valuation which the world-process fails to justify. Our spiritual intuitions seem to be stultified, in other words, by the course of the Providential Order. Is there no compensating principle in the Christian Revelation which will enable us to turn the balance of these unequal scales?

It may be confidently affirmed that outside the Christian Faith there is no light anywhere on this acute problem. The religion which created the difficulty has, however, provided us with its solution. It is precisely to those to whom the world-process had been most unfriendly, those who had been most pitilessly crushed by circumstance, and mishandled by their fellows in the struggle for existence and well-being, that Jesus first carried the Gospel of succour and hope. By His revelation of the Divine Father-hood, by His message of cheer and kindness, by His outflowing pity and love towards the discouraged as well as the sinful, He not only shed light into the darkest places of human experience, but poured a stream of helpful grace into lives that had lost all faith in God as well as in themselves. The kingdom of God was primarily for the poor, the persecuted, the sorrowful, as well as for the pure in heart, and those who hungered and thirsted for righteousness; and through the gates of the other Life shone the rosy dawn of hope for those who were the mere flotsam and jetsam of earth's chances. It had already become an intuition of seer and psalmist that "this life is not all"; and it is just this element of contingency, misfortune, and defeat in the lives of men which quickened in these twilight seers the hope that in another world, or even in this world when renewed by the coming of the Kingdom of God, the balance would be redressed, and those who had been victims of cruel mischance here would come to their own at last. Jesus appropriated and glorified this intuitive hope of redress and restitution which had so mightily stirred the great souls of the past; indeed His attitude towards all the instinctive affirmations of faith was that of ample encouragement and gracious promise,

"If it were not so, I would have told you," covers the ground out of which spring all these lyric longings of the soul which sing of a Heaven for those who worthily bear the uncertain happenings and suffer for the lost causes of this mortal life. May we not also firmly hold to the belief—as already suggested in an earlier chapter—which seems (at least to us) to be tacitly involved in the very texture of the Gospel, that for those whom this life has denied anything like a fair chance of learning and practising the laws of true living, there will be given another chance in the after-life, where the inequality of this world's opportunities will be redressed, and they will have adequate scope for realising the highest that is in them? Meanwhile, the vast majority of us have a real opportunity here of rising to a better life, and one of the chief incentives to this is found in the stinging challenge of the very disabilities against which we are too prone to rail.

> "Rejoice, we are allied
> To that which doth provide
> And not partake, effect and not receive.
> A spark disturbs our clod;
> Nearer we hold to God,
> Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe."[1]

VI

After what has been said about evil as limitation, a few words only are needed concerning evil as *error*. This is but the subjective aspect of the same fact.

It is clear that this universe being the arena of a process of evolution, and man being the subject of such a process, he could not under the conditions of the case come on the scene with a mind already equipped so fully that he was able to see his way clearly, and therefore be incapable of falling into

[1] Browning, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*.

error and mistake. What marked man from the beginning was that he was the first creature to break away from the life of instinct, and to develop the life of intelligence. Now the instinctive life acts with almost infallible certainty within its ambit, but it cannot adapt itself to new situations, nor make adjustments to an unfamiliar environment. Intelligence has to step into the breach, just because it is the instrument of such adjustments. We see the beginnings of this process in some of the higher animals, but only within narrow limits, and as an aid to instinct under special circumstances and for particular ends. In man it has become dominant, and, while the function of instinct has by no means been eliminated from human nature, its ideal place is secondary to that of intelligence, or reason, and is meant to be under its guidance and control. But intelligence—like all other aptitudes—had to begin at the bottom of the scale, and only gradually to grow into efficiency. *Error was thus inevitable in a world of such complexity and contingency as this.* Human experience is a process of trial and error, and gradual correction. Intelligence is marked by two fortunate features—it is eminently teachable, and its results are cumulative. But the process has been hampered by two opposing difficulties. First, the total environment is almost inexhaustively rich and complicated, and the dawning intelligence of man was far from competent for the enormous task of mastering it in all its ramifications ; and secondly, while theoretically man may be called the teachable being, his own nature is full of contradictory elements, and has not lent itself passively or willingly to the process of learning. It has entrenched itself behind a barrier of stubborn prejudices and preferences hard to penetrate ; it may be said of men that they have

often "loved darkness better than light." For these and other reasons the territory of error has always covered a large area on the map of human life, and it has resisted the march of knowledge with an obstinacy that has had tragic consequences, and which still hampers the attainment of truth to a disheartening extent.

While, therefore, the fact of error constitutes no real problem in the mystery of divine Providence, it is a very insistent problem in human Providence, and has been deeply entangled with two other problems—those of suffering and moral evil. In the purpose of God, man's intelligence, while always fallible, is his chief weapon for the mastery of his environment. But for the dominance of his lower nature, it would long since have blazed a way through the entanglements of inevitable error into an ordered kingdom of reason and progress. But the world is still a battle-ground between the powers of darkness and the children of light, and it will be long before the castle of human ignorance, with its guarding entrenchments of prejudice and vested interests, is sapped and overthrown. Only in a world fully redeemed will the sun of truth shine from a cloudless sky, and the "nations walk in the light thereof."

CHAPTER II

EVIL AS SUFFERING

"'Pain and struggle, an agony of endeavour,' are conditions of progress; but only Pessimism, which is Hedonism veneered, sees an eternal injustice in pain."

McDowell.

WE pass on now to consider a second sense in which the word "evil" is used—that implied in the fact and experience of pain and suffering. If evil as limitation may be roughly classed as physical, this form may be denominated *psychic*. It belongs to the experience of sentient creatures only, and is a specialised aspect of feeling. In order to greater clearness in our argument, it will be found advantageous to distinguish between *pain* and *suffering*. The former belongs properly to the region of sense in its more restricted meaning, and corresponds to *pleasure* as its opposite or contrasted feeling; the latter may be conveniently reserved for the vaguer and wider susceptibilities of the ego, especially in its social and moral relations, and is opposed to *joy* and *happiness*.[1] Thus pain refers to some aspect of organic sensibility, while suffering belongs to the region of the affections,

[1] Baldwin (*Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, s.n. "Pain and Pleasure") expresses the same distinction thus: "The pain which attaches to organic conditions has recently been distinguished somewhat sharply from so-called 'pleasantness,' the former being considered, on the basis of considerable evidence, as a sensation, the latter as a more general affective character attaching, with its antithesis 'pleasantness,' to the mental life in all its phases."

the sentiments and the will. The distinction is seen more clearly in the phrases "I have a pain" and "I suffer anguish." The one belongs to the periphery of life, the other is a fact of inward experience. We can easily distinguish ourselves from our pains; our sufferings, on the other hand, often penetrate into the inner fastnesses of personality. The value of this distinction will presently be seen.

I

Pleasure and pain are unanalysable facts of sentiency. Some psychologists would make them a feature of all conscious states, but most writers (with whom we agree) recognise a "neutral" state of consciousness of which these two are but specific and more or less contrasted forms. Pleasure is that form of sense-experience which accompanies the normal and unrestricted exercise of our vital and sensory functions to the enjoyment of which we are instinctively drawn, and which we seek to prolong and to intensify; pain, on the other hand, is any form of sense-experience which we as instinctively seek to avoid or to lessen. Some amount of pleasure accompanies most phases of normal sense-stimulation, at least in their earlier stages, though there is usually a more or less rapid waning of the pleasurable element in sensation as time goes on, especially if the stimulus is intense. Pain generally supervenes when any sense-organ is abnormally stimulated, or when its exercise is inhibited or interfered with by inner disharmony or extraneous causes. It would appear, therefore, that pleasure is normally an accompaniment (and sign) of healthy sensorial experience; while pain is an indication of an abnormal condition. We thus naturally tend to

seek for what is pleasurable, and to avoid what is painful. In this sense pain takes on the aspect of an " evil."

The question whether in actual experience there is more of pleasure than of pain, or *vice versa*, is one that has always had a fascination for thinkers. There is here, however, an assumption which is more than questionable, i.e. that pleasure and pain are plus and minus quantities on the same scale. There is a rough pragmatic truth here; we do in practice seem to treat normal experience as a total whose sum is reached by the subtraction of the one factor from the other. Optimism and Pessimism as theories of life are based on this fact as a philosophical principle, the one affirming that there is an overplus of pleasure in the totality of human experience, while the other affirms the contrary. Such evaluations, however, useful perhaps in some ways, do not carry us far for several reasons. In the first place, while individual creatures are able, roughly speaking, to compare the amount of pleasure and pain in their own inner experience, this evaluation is purely subjective, nor is there any conceivable objective standard to which our experiences can be referred, and by which they can be adequately measured and compared. I know the " value " to me of such-and-such a pleasure or pain that I have; but I cannot cross the boundary of another person's consciousness and know experimentally what his are like. Observation tells us also that even our subjective valuations of pleasure and pain are full of uncertainties; what is pleasurable to me at one time is painful at another. Further, the temperamental level of sense-experience (from which measurement starts) is different in each person; one man is naturally an optimist, and looks at life's experiences through rose-coloured spectacles,

while under identical conditions his next neighbour is atrabiliar in his attitude, and depreciates as worthless what the other finds full of reward. Every man lives in a world of his own as regards the quality and intensity of his organic pains and pleasures; and, as there is no experimental bridge or tunnel between our several worlds, there can be no common measure of what they severally contain. Even language is a poor medium of exchange between one soul and another as regards feeling, however useful it is for the interplay of thought. Any attempt, therefore, to build up even an empirical theory of life as preponderantly pleasurable or painful on the whole is doomed to futility. It could not be more than provisionally complete if the testimony of all sentient creatures could be discovered and summed up; and that testimony would be too uncertain and variable to be of any scientific value owing to the innumerable and ever-changing factors—of temperament, mood, health, etc.—which would disturb their judgment in evaluating their own complex experiences.

There is another and still more serious difficulty in attempting to strike a balance between our pleasures and our pains. To put it in the words of a recent writer of distinction: "Even in some of their commonest forms the two refuse to be finally distinguished, and force themselves upon us as kindred aspects of some condition essential to our lives."[1] It is not merely that they are linked by causation and succession, but they "infect each other's character." There are elements of pain in all the more massive and complex pleasures, and *vice versa*. This is specially true of the more generalised forms of experience which come under the heading of suffering and happiness, but it is true also of pains

[1] Bosanquet's *The Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 163.

and pleasures in the restricted sense here adopted. It may even be said that they condition each other as experiences. We should scarcely know what pleasures are except as contrasted with their opposite pains; even the less or more of pleasure contains an element of pain, and a modicum of the one (as in a discord or crude contrast of colours) helps to define and heighten the other. In the fiercer pleasures (e.g. those of pursuit) there is always a strong *soupçon* of their opposite; and it is often difficult to say of the tangle of certain intense and complicated sensations whether the separate strands of pain and pleasure are on the whole overwhelmingly pleasurable or the reverse, as for instance in the experiences of hunger and satiety. Finally, we are all familiar with the way in which pleasurable or painful sensations pass suddenly, or by insensible degrees, into each other, the determining condition being generally our subjective state. The most exquisite music becomes an intolerable pain to a nerve-ridden patient; while a sensation of intense cold which would be acutely painful, under ordinary conditions, may become a source of refreshing coolness to a fever-stricken patient. It is thus abundantly clear that pain is only a relative "evil" in sensory experience, and may on the whole even conduce to the general well-being of the organism. It is only by a false abstraction that it ever takes on the appearance of an evil in the absolute sense.

II

We will now pass to the consideration of those wider and more generalised forms of experience indicated by the contrasted terms "suffering" and "happiness."

What we have just found true of our sensory

experience is doubly true of our purely psychical sufferings and joys. They cannot be separated into essential antagonism; their causes and effects are inextricably entangled in the complexity of experience; they often serve to heighten each other according to the working of the law of relativity; they pass into each other by insensible gradations or sudden alternations of feeling. Speaking generally, just as pain accompanies what is organically injurious, so suffering ideally marks what inhibits and cramps the normal expansion or self-realisation of the ego; and *vice versa*. Since the ego has something of the nature of the infinite in it, which it is ever seeking to realise, its struggle within and against its finite conditions must necessarily involve a sense of tension in the effort to transcend those conditions. Thus suffering of some kind or other is a condition of this higher self-realisation of the ego, just as happiness accompanies the sense of a partial victory in the struggle. And therefore, while we feel bound to rebel against suffering, and are ever seeking to avoid or conquer it as something alien to our true welfare, it cannot be reckoned among essential evils; it only becomes an evil *to us* when we submit to its inhibitory causes from cowardice or lack of moral fibre, and fail to reach through it to the fuller life which is our true goal. Suffering is a stairway that leads to the perfect life in one direction, as it leads downwards to defeat and destruction on the other, and whether it shall prove to be the one or the other *depends on the attitude taken to it by the experient ego*. There is no easy road to the higher life; for all of us the way is a way of suffering. Happiness is that which accompanies the foretaste and the attainment of victory in this struggle; it is something which is subtly interwoven with the fiery strands of suffering

which constitute the underside of that struggle, and it often carries up much of the suffering with it into its final harmony. The noble soul would thus not spare itself one of the salutary pangs which mark its progress upwards; just as in Dante's poem the souls in purgatory passionately desired the pains which prepared them for their place in the eternal love, and took care, in the interest of seeing and hearing Dante, not to extend any part of their persons beyond the flames. Thus—

> "The man that hath great griefs I pity not;
> 'Tis something to be great
> In any wise, and hint the larger state
> Though but the shadow of a shade, God wot!
> . . . . .
> But tenfold great is he, who feels all pains
> Not partial, knowing them
> As ripples parted from the gold-beak'd stem
> Wherewith God's Galley onward ever strives.
> To him the sorrows are the tension-thrills
> Of that serene endeavour
> Which yields to God for ever and for ever
> The joy that is more ancient than the hills."[1]

III

It will be convenient here to postpone the inquiry that would naturally suggest itself at this point—as to the normal functions of pain and suffering in human experience—and deal with that perplexing problem of pain in the sub-human organic world which causes such acute solicitude in the minds of many tender and kindly people, and blocks the way of not a few to a happy belief in the goodness of God.

The sentiment of sympathy with the animal creation is a plant of modern growth. In ancient literature it is difficult to find a single passage in which there

[1] T. E. Brown's poem on "Pain."

is any expression of interest in, much less of kindly solicitude for, the feelings of animals. The fact that the lower creatures in a state of nature were liable to causes which, at least in the case of human beings, would produce acute pain and suffering did not seem to raise any difficulty, or suggest a lack of benevolent regard on the part of the Creator. The joy of the ancient psalmist in the harmonious workings of natural law was dashed by no qualms for the agonies and tragedies that run like a crimson thread through the tangled web of the organic order. "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger," they "roar after their prey and *seek their meat from God*." . . . "These wait upon Thee, that Thou mayest give them their food in due season." . . . "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches." Even St. Paul, referring to the humane Mosaic injunction that the ox must not be muzzled when treading out the corn,[1] adds with somewhat disconcerting emphasis, "Doth God care for oxen?"[2]—as though it were inconceivable that this divine command could arise from any regard for the brute creation—"or saith He it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt this is written." Here is suggested the customary if naïve attitude of mankind till almost within living memory—that the animal creation is there for man to do just as he pleases with it, careless whether his treatment of the lower creatures gives them pain or not, oblivious indeed of the question whether they are capable of pain at all. Even to-day it is probably the minority, even in civilised countries, who have any genuine sympathy with animal life, and, of those who possess it, no mean proportion will indulge in

[1] Deut. xxv. 4. [2] 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10.

sports which have no object but the killing or maiming of defenceless animals, either by hunting them, or setting them to fight each other to the death. None the less, the sentiment of pity has at last awakened in the more humane and religious section of modern communities, and once here it was inevitable that it should suggest this fresh problem for Theism—how is it that God has so arranged the conditions of animal life that pain, and apparently at times the acutest mental suffering, is a part of their inalienable lot ?

In approaching this question, one or two preliminary matters should be disposed of.

1. *Do animals suffer at all* ? This question would seem frivolous were it not that it has been seriously discussed by more than one influential thinker, and answered boldly in the negative. Three hundred years ago the French philosopher, René Descartes, took up this position, and his opinion had a widespread influence on the thought of his time. He reduced animal life to mere mechanism, and advanced the view that animals' cries are the result of reflex movements and acts in a curiously working machine, in which, when one part is touched in a certain way, " the wheels and springs in the interior perform their work," whereupon a note supposed to express pleasure or pain is evolved ; but there is no consciousness or " feeling "—any more, e.g., than in the case of a squeaking cart-wheel, or a penny whistle. And though this view may be considered generally discredited, it has recently been seriously put forth afresh by a distinguished naturalist—E. Kay Robinson —who in a recent monograph [1] has ventured to suggest

[1] *The Religion of Nature* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1906), v. pp. 67–74.

that animals are incapable of conscious suffering at all, on the ground that they are devoid of that self-consciousness which is the distinguishing characteristic of the human experient. The actions of animals which suggest pain—as when a lame horse shudders at the approach of the harness, or when a dog licks itself when hurt, or when terror seems to look out of a chased creature's eye, or when a worm wriggles when trodden upon, or when animals driven to a slaughter-house exhibit the outward signs of intense fear—are all the reflex accompaniments of inherited (unconscious) instincts, evolved in the struggle for existence, and having the preservation of the individual life for their sole object. There is, he argues, no proof whatever that these actions are accompanied by mental feelings of distress and pain, as they would if manifested by human beings. This writer shows great ingenuity in the unfolding of his argument, and he undoubtedly succeeds in proving that, if animals do suffer at all, their sufferings are certainly not marked by such intensity as in the case of human beings under similar circumstances; but it is not likely that the full conclusion he comes to will ever be accepted. The fact that the nervous system of animals is built up on exactly similar lines to that of man, with their central ganglia, their afferent and efferent fibres, etc., and that the instinctive reactions following on injury to any part are so similar in both cases, suggests irresistibly that the mental concomitants of these movements are also *generically* the same, however different they may be in intensity and subjective significance. The opposed theory, however plausible from certain points of view, is certainly incapable of proof, for no one has ever been able to enter by sympathy into the experience of animals,

nor can they communicate their feelings to us through the medium of language as we are able to do to one another; while all the suggestions of analogy are against it. Because the sensitive plant behaves as though it had feeling (of which it is presumably incapable) and because the sea-anemone behaves now like a plant and now like an animal, and is capable of propagation by fission like many plants, does this prove that the more developed animals are incapable of sensation? Is it not more likely to be true, on the other hand, that the rudiments of feeling are to be found even in the lowest organisms, and that the difference between their sensations and those of the highest animals is but a matter of degree? The presumption is immeasurably in this direction. The physiological condition of feeling is the possession of a nervous system, and it is a psychological principle that the capacity for intense feeling depends on the elaboration and specialisation of the nerve-centres and of the terminal delicacy of the sensory fibres leading to them.

2. In what way does "*self-consciousness*" affect the *intensity of pain and suffering*? In dealing with this problem Mr. Robinson has unquestionably hit on a vitally important question. There is a very sharp distinction between the bare consciousness of animals and the self-consciousness which is solely the attribute of human life—a distinction which carries with it a crucial contrast between the experience of pain possible to the highest animals and to the lowest men. He is also probably right in pointing out an immense difference between states of our own experience when our self-consciousness is dormant, and states when it is acutely active. The pains we feel in the former case are so rudimentary that in moments

of intense preoccupation, or of great mental excitement, we are scarcely conscious of pain at all, even though the physical expression of pain may be vividly shown. In such a case we approximate probably in our mental experience to that of the brute under similar circumstances, as Descartes himself pointed out. If the beasts can see at all, he says, " they see as we do when our mind is distracted and keenly applied elsewhere; the images of outward objects paint themselves on the retina and possibly even the images of outward objects on the optic nerves determine our limbs to different movements, but we feel nothing of it at all, and move as if we were automata." In a word, the difference between saying " I feel " and " I know that I feel " is immeasurable in the sharpness and intensity of the experience, and this probably expresses the full difference between the consciousness of animals and that of mankind.[1] The fallacy of most lovers of animals lies in their tendency to attribute to them the intensity of our own self-conscious experience of pain or pleasure. Now it is undeniable that our capacity for this experience depends on two features of our conscious life—the power to remember the past and to forecast future experience—and both these features are probably absent from the psychic equipment of animals, except (at best) to a very faint degree; the only experience of which they are normally capable being the consciousness of immediate present

[1] " The sensation of being cut by a skilful surgeon would not, I think, be pain if one could keep one's imagination out of it. If it is quickly done you would feel nothing till it was over, and then what affects you is not the hurt, but the idea of the steel on your skin. That causes a shiver with the sense of your teeth being set on edge, and, if you don't steady yourself, you go back and back on the sensation till you grow sick and faint " (*Comments of Bagshot*, pp. 47–51).

conditions. Their capacity for pain is thus very much smaller than ours, and we should probably never attribute to them anything so vivid as our experience of suffering. What a world of fear, and dread, and foreboding is thus mercifully swept out of our view, and how irrational it is for us to attribute to animals the complicated and long-drawn-out agony into which our memory and imagination multiply our present pains and sufferings!

3. It would be well also to remember that, while our vision of animal suffering would vanish if once it were proved that they are incapable of feeling, so also would the vision of pleasure and happiness in animals, which fills lovers of animals with such delight. Does the dog who meets his master with joyful barkings and extravagant leapings and fawnings feel no pleasure in doing so? Are the love-songs of birds, the lowing of cows, the gambolling of lambs and play of kittens, the manifold happy cries of innumerable creatures that people our forests and fields, of no more significance psychically than the harsh noises of a railway station, or the musical sound of falling waters? Since pains and sufferings are at most but occasional experiences in animal life, while their expressions of pleasure are frequent and habitual, it is clear that we should lose more than we gain in our outlook on Nature if it were once conclusively proved that there is neither pain nor pleasure in the psychic life of animals, for we cannot surrender the one without also losing the other. Furthermore, there is a very practical side to this problem. In spite of Mr. Robinson's disclaimer, the logical issue of his belief in the insensibility of animals to suffering would be to encourage the old unthinking habit of cruelty to brutes, and (more serious still) to remove the last humanitarian objection

to the practice of unbridled vivisection. This was the immediate result of the Cartesian theory of animal automatism, which was eagerly seized upon by the Port Royal recluses, who forthwith dissected living animals (there were no anæsthetics in those days!) "in order to show to a morbid curiosity the circulation of the blood, and who finally embalmed the doctrine in a syllogism of their logic—"No matter thinks; every soul of beast is matter; therefore no soul of beast thinks." [1]

Bearing these considerations in mind, we pass on to consider the general problem of suffering in Nature. Making due allowance for all that has been said, there are ugly facts in the region of animal life which cannot be blinked or set aside. For instance, we are met with the fact that a considerable proportion of animals are carnivorous in habit, and are equipped with a whole armoury of lethal weapons whose only purpose is to enable them to slay and devour other creatures. The anonymous author of *Evil and Evolution*,[2] after giving a formidable description of the elaborate contrivances of teeth and claws, horns and hoofs, stings and poison fangs, of aggressive carnivores, and drawing attention to the quivering nerves and agonised cries of the unfortunate creatures who form their natural prey, is so dumbfounded by the extent and apparent intensity of animal suffering that he declines to believe that the Creator is responsible for these things, and falls back on the hypothesis that an Evil Spirit must have usurped some of His creative functions, or at least that he has successfully interfered in the matter, and has given the organic world a

[1] *Encycl. Brit.* (10th ed.), vol. vii, p. 125 (d).

[2] *Evil and Evolution*, by the author of *The Social Horizon* (Macmillan & Co., 1897).

" twist " resulting in the appearance of these formidable and pitiless creatures. This, however, only postpones the problem, and either enthrones a permanent dualism at the heart of things, or makes God still ultimately responsible for the mystery of suffering, as indeed every consistent Theist must believe that He is. There are other and more cogent considerations lying nearer to hand which greatly assuage the pressure of such sufferings as still remain to be " justified," in addition to the mitigations already mentioned.

1. In the first place, the closest observers of organic life largely agree that the amount and intensity of animal suffering has been greatly exaggerated. Sir Samuel Baker, it is true, says that Nature is " a system of terrorism from beginning to end " ; adding that " the fowl destroys the worm, the hawk destroys the fowl, the cat destroys the hawk, the dog kills the cat, the leopard kills the dog, the lion kills the leopard, and the lion is slain by the man." And unquestionably Nature is largely the scene of an internecine struggle ; animals do prey ruthlessly on one another ; the strong show no pity for the weak ; under the rigorous law of Natural Selection the pathways of life are red with blood, and vocal with the cries of countless creatures as they are slaughtered. J. S. Mill goes so far as to say that " if imitation of the Creator's will as revealed in Nature were applied as a rule of action in this case, the most atrocious enormities of the worst men [1] would be more than justified by the apparent intention of Providence that throughout all animated Nature the strong should prey on the weak." None

[1] This is a hopeless exaggeration. The cruelties of men towards one another are the fruit of a depraved and selfish nature ; but animals only prey on each other for food. There is surely a difference between wanton cruelty and the satisfaction of a normal organic want !

the less, there is a growing consensus of testimony on the other side, both as to the probable balance of pleasure over pain in the life of animals, and as to the merciful way in which death speedily ends such sufferings as are inflicted on them in the course of nature. Russel Wallace, in his book on *Darwinism*, draws quite an idyllic picture of the happiness and joy that prevail in the fields and woods, and reinstates the feeling which most of us had as children that animal life is very happy on the whole and that its pleasures greatly outweigh its pains. "The supposed 'torments' and 'miseries' of animals," he says, "have little real existence, but are the reflections of the imagined sensations of cultivated men and women in similar circumstances, and the amount of suffering caused by the struggle for existence among animals is quite insignificant." [1] He goes on to speak of the enjoyments in the lives of most animals; the excitement and exercise of the hunt, the periods of complete rest which recuperates their weariness; so that we must conclude that animals, as a rule, enjoy all the happiness of which they are capable. Ill-health is unfrequent, and disease generally quickly kills. When devoured by enemies, animals seldom suffer more than momentary agony. Darwin also inclines to the view that wild animals are, on the whole, happy in the midst of the "struggle for existence," and concludes: "When we reflect on this struggle, we may console ourselves with the full belief that the war of Nature is not incessant, that no fear is felt, that death is generally prompt, and that the vigorous, the healthy, and the happy survive and multiply." [2] Whether or not we are justified in speaking of purpose in Nature, the issue seems unquestionably the production of the

[1] *Darwinism*, p. 37. [2] Quoted by Wallace in his *Darwinism*, p. 40

largest number of healthy and happy specimens of each species that can find a place in her economy.

2. The range and the severity of the so-called struggle for existence has also been greatly exaggerated. Prince Kropotkin, in his striking book on *Mutual Aid in Nature*, draws a graphic picture of the gregarious tribes of animals in the lower latitudes of Asia and Africa, of the numberless herds of reindeer and musk-oxen and polar foxes to the north, and of the herds of wild horses, donkeys, camels and sheep in the plains of Central Asia. "All these animals," he says, "live in societies and nations, sometimes numbering hundreds of thousands of individuals, although now, after three centuries of gunpowder civilisation, we find but the *débris* of the immense aggregations of old. How trifling, in comparison with them, are the numbers of the carnivores! And how false, therefore, is the view of those who speak of the animal world as if nothing were seen in it but lions and hyenas plunging their bleeding teeth into the flesh of the victims! One might as well imagine that the whole of human life is nothing but a succession of Tel-el-Kebir and Geok-tepe massacres."

3. Nor is the struggle itself between one kind of species and another, even though it is a battle, *à outrance*, without its compensating joys. Without going so far as to agree with a naturalist in an article in one of our dailies, who said that "the fox enjoys being hunted," we may quote Mr. Francis Galton's opinion when he says, "I believe that every antelope has to run for its life once every one or two days upon an average, and that he starts and gallops under the influence of a false alarm many times a day. Those who have crouched at night by the side of the pools of the desert, in order to have a shot at the beasts that frequent

them, see strange scenes of animal life; how the creatures gambol at one moment and fight at another, how a herd suddenly halts in strained attention, and then breaks into a maddened rush, as one of them becomes conscious of the stealthy movements or rank scent of a beast of prey. Now this hourly life and death excitement is a keen delight to most wild creatures."

It is at least clear to Dr. Wallace that " the constant effort to escape enemies, the ever-recurring struggle against the forces of Nature," are " the means whereby the beauty and enjoyment in Nature is brought about." If we attribute analogous feelings to animals as we possess ourselves, is it wrong to imagine that the zest of the hunt, the thrills of successful escape, the joy of the mortal combat is theirs, as it is, under certain circumstances, ours? In Lord Wolseley's autobiography there is a very remarkable passage describing the exaltation and intoxication of mind that visits soldiers in the crisis of battle, which often takes away all its horror, and even buries the agony of mortal wounds deep below the threshold of consciousness. Are we to shut out this compensatory feeling from the experience of animals? Probably the horror of battle is felt more keenly by the spectators than the combatants, and Mr. Rudyard Kipling has entered far more truly into the actualities of animal psychology in his inimitable " Jungle Books " than the arm-chair naturalists who grow pale over the supposed agonies resulting from the fierce struggle for existence among animals.

Another line of observation tending in the same direction is presented to us in a tiny, but priceless, volume by J. Crowther Hirst, which bears the title *Is Nature Cruel?*—who, some years ago, made pains-

taking inquiries as to the experiences of those who had been attacked and severely wounded by wild beasts. He details the evidence given by sixty-six persons who had passed through this trying experience. Fifteen of these instances were recitals of personal experiences; while a much more numerous array is covered by the statements, more or less precise as to figures, of gentlemen who had been in contact with injured persons. The consentient *testimony of all but two of these persons was that no pain whatever was felt during the attack*, though in many instances they had sustained serious injuries, including not only severe laceration, but the conscious crunching of bones. Generally speaking, it was noticed that the more severe the wound, the less pain was felt during its infliction.

The reason for this strange oblivion of pain is not so clear. In the well-known case of Dr. Livingstone, the shock of the attack of the wild beast that mauled him seemed to have caused "a sort of dreaminess," in which there was *no sense of pain or feeling of terror*, though he was fully conscious of what was happening. In another case, the effect of a bite is described as painless, "rather like having a tooth drawn out with laughing gas." The same gentleman, a lieutenant in the Army, describes his experience, and accounts for it thus: "I think the great strength of the beast was partly the cause of the painlessness. But I think the painlessness of the thing was, at any rate, very much due to other causes, viz. (1) I was very much excited; (2) I was knocked over violently" (this nearly always happens) "though, as far as I know, not stunned at all but perhaps rather dazed; . . . (3) the bear, possibly after the first bite, tore out and broke the nerve in my thigh."

Mr. E. C. S. Baker writes, from Gujong, Calchar: "There was a very bad man-eating tiger here in 1891, and before I shot him I had the misfortune to see many of his victims, some four or five of whom are now alive. A woman who was bitten twice through the muscles of her arm told me she had suffered no pain at all. A man, bitten through the neck and shoulders, who died in three days, suffered no pain at all whilst being bitten, nor during the three days he lived. A Naga man, bitten through the thigh, suffered no pain at the time, but agonies afterwards."

This consistent and uniform testimony on the part of victims of ferocious attacks from wild beasts provides us with the real answer to the question at the head of this section. If beings like ourselves, endowed with the full possibilities of self-conscious suffering, under circumstances of mortal danger and tragic injury, almost habitually lose the sense of suffering, and in some cases have been actually known to watch the process of their own dismemberment without pain till unconsciousness drew its merciful veil over their ultimate fate; is it not morally certain that this must be the case with the lower animals who are seized and eaten by their natural enemies? And, if so, what becomes of the so-called cruelty of Nature, or of the God who has made things as they are? Why it is ordained that one species should prey on another, and life be so widely maintained on life, is a question we cannot now enter into. We must accept things as they are; and the conclusion to which I would lead my readers is that the actual facts of the organic world, so far from justifying an indictment against the benevolence of the Creator, or necessitating the theory of the diabolic origin of the *carnivores* (as

is suggested by the author of *Evil and Evolution*), or leaving us in a state of dumb perplexity at the lethal aspects of animal life, rather encourage us in the faith that at the heart of things there is love and not cruelty; that the uses of suffering far outweigh its sorrows; that pain is normally a preservative and a stimulus to efficiency in all forms of life; that its incidence is occasional, its purpose beneficent; and that, when at last death comes, it is in no terrifying form, but veiled, and usually instantaneous and painless.

These facts and considerations help us to a more measured and credible view of the extent of pain and suffering among animals, and of those organic pains which we share with them under similar conditions. The conclusions to which we are led are as follows: the amount and intensity of suffering in the animate creation is far less than the exaggerated accounts given by some observers of animal life, and the morbid sympathy of many humane people, would lead us to believe. Nature has her psychic anæsthetics as well as her physical fangs, and she has set merciful limits to the capacity of the nervous system for sensation, so that when a certain "threshold" of intensity is passed, pain brings on its own remedy in producing partial or total unconsciousness.[1] This is clearly so

[1] "The thought of pain as something capable of illimitable increase in proportion to the torture, is an illusion. Pain has its own limit—the limit of unconsciousness. Whoever has fainted from pain has reached his limit. He will suffer no more if he is burnt at the stake. It is an illusion also to suppose that the pains which are horrible to describe are necessarily worse than the commonplace pains we suffer without sympathy. We should never think lightly of pain, but we need not torture ourselves by supposing that the wounded on the battle-field or the victims of an accident suffer an indefinite multiplication of the pains we are familiar with" (*Comments of Bagshot*, p. 48).

in the case of the sufferings incidental to the struggle for survival among animals and men; and in the case of animals it is probably as true of the pains produced by disease and parasitism (i.e. cases in which lower creatures attach themselves to and feed upon the living organisms of "higher" creatures). The intense sufferings caused by certain forms of experience among men come under a somewhat different category; with these we shall deal a little later on.

IV

1. Further light breaks in upon us when we consider the normal function of pain in the animal and human economy. So far from its being a wanton infliction on His creatures on the part of the Creator, it can be easily shown that it holds an important and necessary place among the factors of vital efficiency. Pain, in the first place, is one of the *conditions of self-preservation on the part of living creatures.* Every organism comes into an environment containing elements that are unfavourable, as well as others that are favourable to its preservation. Heat and cold, season, weather and climate, poisons and preying creatures, face every living being as it comes on the scene. Were it not endowed with certain aptitudes through which it is enabled to steer its way successfully through the medley of hostile chances and influences that surround it, there would be little prospect of survival for any living being. Chief among these aptitudes are these two—instinct, and sensibility or liability to pleasure and pain. Every creature is endowed with a set of organic instincts which enable it from the very start of its individual life to avoid certain specific dangers and to seek for its proper food, for shelter, and for

the general conditions of its well-being. These instincts are most plentifully distributed among those animals among which the parental qualities are least developed, and which have little or no period of infancy to pass through. As we rise in the scale of being, infancy lengthens, and correspondingly the stock of organic instincts grows increasingly meagre and inefficient—or they altogether change their character. With the development of spontaneity and initiative, the developing organism becomes less dependent on its unconscious or reflex instincts for its preservation, and more and more dependent on its conscious states. The capacity for experiencing pain is a concomitant of this higher stage of existence. On the whole, and in the long run, it may be affirmed that *self-conserving acts are pleasurable, while acts inimical to organic well-being are painful.* Suffering is thus normally one of Nature's warnings that we are in the presence of some danger which threatens our vital efficiency. We say *normally*, but it must be pointed out that, even in the case of animals, over-indulgence in pleasurable experiences, or refusal to face certain ordeals that are for the time painful, entails several penalties. It may therefore be said that it is only within limits, and at certain levels of experience, that the conserving function of suffering may be safely followed; none the less, within those limits the law holds true. Pleasure and pain are Nature's sentinels, standing at the outposts of life, helping living creatures to safeguard their own vital interests.

2. Secondly, suffering fulfils (again within limits) a *stimulative vital function*, and is thus one of the conditions of evolution. Creatures predominantly instinctive are stagnant in the scale of being; being

fully equipped for all organic purposes, and able to meet their own needs as they arise, they tend to sink into a vital routine, which is fatal to organic progress. In the Spencerian phrase, they have attained to a state of stable equilibrium in relation to environment. But the creatures that are in the line of progress upwards are those whose sensibilities and wants run ahead of their satisfactions. In the endeavour to avoid painful experiences, and of attaining to pleasurable ends, life has been perpetually goaded to seek a fuller life. Especially is this true of the sufferings arising from the pains of want, and from feelings of desire. Now want is always felt as an evil, and desire is always an impulse seeking something pleasurable; and these are the *vis a tergo*, and the *vis a fronte* which together impel towards a fuller life. "If a man has no wants, he will make no efforts; and if he makes no efforts, his condition will never be bettered." [1] It is thus pleasure *plus* suffering, and not pleasure *or* suffering by themselves which are the true forces of progress, and of the two the thing we call evil—suffering—is possibly the more potent and fruitful influence for good; for pleasure, when attained, is liable to induce a spirit of ease, while a sense of suffering seldom fails to act as a goad. Therefore a man may "bless God for the law of growth with all the fighting it imposes upon him"; evil in this sense, "i.e. that it is man's duty to fight, being one of the major perfections of the Universe," [2] since it is one of the conditions of man's inherent impulse towards perfection.

3. The normal function of suffering, however, is not by any means limited to its value as a motive for the individual. It has also a *potent part to play in social*

[1] Professor Sorley, *Ethics of Naturalism*, p. 250.
[2] C. S. Peirce, *Hibbert Journal*, vii, p. 107.

life, among animals as well as among men. It is indeed the foundation-stone of all social progress. The dissatisfactions and pains arising out of the inability of individual creatures to fulfil their own wants, to defend themselves against their natural enemies—in a word, to be complete in themselves—first caused certain animals to herd together; to seek and lend help to each other; and to find satisfaction in each other's company. This process, once started, did not cease, for it was soon found to be rich in beneficent results. Even on the lowest level of gregariousness, the individual found that he somehow shared in the life of the herd, contributing in turn his own strength and skill in defence and attack for his fellows. In the case of mankind this has issued in the marvellously rich and complex social life we enjoy to-day, which places at the disposal of the individual all the wealth of our hereditary institutions, all the satisfaction of our social intercourse, as well as all the claims and rewards of our ethical relationships. True, some of the acutest forms of suffering that fall on the individual come upon him from his social environment; he has to bear the burden of others' selfishness and misdeeds; nay, not infrequently he is the victim of their deliberate and studied wrong-doing, as well as of that vaguer wrong-doing which comes from no direct volition on the part of anyone, but from the general confusion and abnormality of human relations.

4. Here we come within sight of one of the deepest mysteries of our human lot—that of *vicarious suffering*. From the dawn of reflection this problem has exercised and troubled the human heart. The sorrows and sufferings which come on a man through his own fault constitute no real problem for the thoughtful mind; there is in all of us an intuitive recognition of the law

of retribution which lies at the heart of things. The tragedy of faith begins with the vision of that suffering which is *not* deserved, and which not infrequently falls on the most deserving, while the least deserving often apparently escape the just penalty of their wrong-doing. And there is a vast amount of suffering both in the organic and human world which appears to be a by-product of the evolutionary process, which seems, at least at first sight, to have no significance at all.

The writer has elsewhere expounded at some length the function of vicarious suffering in creation, but he may be permitted, for convenience' sake, to summarise the argument here.[1] Beginning on the lowest plane, we find a law running through organic Nature whereby *the weak have to suffer for the strong*. This is the result of that law of progress whereby the superfluous and (necessarily) the weakest members of each race are eliminated in the struggle for existence in order to leave room for the survival of the stronger, healthier, and more efficient members of that and other races. The individual here perishes, not only that the species may *survive*, but that it may *progress*. It is a part of the process leading upward and onward. Secondly, to rise a step higher, we come upon the law *whereby the strong suffer for the weak*. This is the "struggle for the life of others" which is as truly a part of the evolutionary process as is the "struggle for self," and it finds its most typical (and *only* animal) form in the action of the procreative and parental instincts. There are some male creatures who die in the act of procreation[2]; and there are some females who die

[1] See *The Ascent Through Christ*, pp. 290–6; cf. pp. 145, etc.

[2] See Maeterlinck, *The Life of the Bee*, chapter on "The Nuptial Flight."

at the moment of giving birth to their offspring. Here we see the principle in its most automatic and uncompromising form; the parent's life is given literally for the child's. In the higher ranges of life it acts in less drastic and more rewarding forms. The mother-bird surrenders herself entirely to her young during the period of incubation; the cock-bird becomes a forager, and grows lean and weak in the effort to provide for his clamorous brood of children. Thus, deep in the heart of organic Nature is rooted the instinct that the strong should suffer (and that without individual reward) for the weak and immature; for there is often real suffering in the performance of this imperious family instinct. And the higher we rise in the scale of being the more heavy are the demands on this instinct, for infancy tends to lengthen, and the young are born more and more helpless as we approach the climax of organic life. In man the principle comes to a kind of maturity. The struggle for the self-life still continues, but it is interwoven with and ennobled by the struggle for the life of others. So we come to the highest form of vicarious suffering, that of *the good for the bad*, the just for the unjust—a principle that finds its highest expression in the Cross of Christ, and in the freely offered sacrifices made by those inspired by that central symbol of suffering love, on behalf of humanity. In the light of that supreme obligation, all vicarious suffering becomes ennobled, for it is the fulfilment of that which in the animal is a prophetic instinct, and in man an uncertain and halting promise. It is impossible to hold that suffering *per se* is a radical evil in a world where the Cross is at once the perfect climax of human devotion and the profoundest revelation of divine love.

V

If such be the normal function of suffering in such a world as this, what of the innumerable instances of this experience in human life where that function fails to realise itself? Granted that when suffering comes into human life in due measure, and when borne in the right spirit, it works out "the peaceable fruits of righteousness," and is a potent factor in the perfecting of character and in the progress of society, it is idle to contend that it always works out in that direction. There is so much apparently aimless suffering in the world; so much that comes on men and women in crushing, overwhelming measure, so that their power of reaction is insufficient to meet it; so much that leads to social wreckage and spiritual ruin, that the considerations hitherto adduced, while they go a certain way in easing the burden of the problem, totally fail to meet the whole case. Granted also that we could face the vision of so much undeserved and poignant physical suffering as exists with hopeful hearts, how can we face the fact that suffering brings final spiritual loss on so many who succumb through weakness in the struggle, and sink into a life of querulousness and despair, or die, in the midst of their days, broken in heart and bankrupt of hope?

It would be well to face such questions frankly and with courage. Reason alone cannot handle so dark and painful a mystery. The interrelationships of life and its environment and of living beings to one another are too complicated and often too remote to be fully traced, so that their meaning may be explained. Under the most optimistic theory of the Providential Order it seems impossible to correlate each event to

its far and all-inclusive end in such a way as to show its place and prove its inherent justice. The scale of the universe is vast beyond the comprehension of our faculties, and the cosmic movement is so slow that it is not possible for us who form a part of it, and are immersed in its details, and whose judgment is warped by self-interest and sympathetic bias and a thousand other unconscious disturbing influences, to relate the experience and fate of each individual to the good of the whole, and to show how the one works out to the other. It is thus perfectly easy to frame an apparently irresistible indictment against the order of Providence if we only keep to the overt facts of life and their immediate consequences. As things stand, it is beyond the power of any writer, however skilful, to reply to such objections on their own level.[1] From the obvious point of view and as far as we can rationally measure and forecast future issues, there are many events in everyone's experience which appear to be nothing less than unredeemed tragedies. Can a broken-hearted widow who has spent her all on the education of a promising son who is killed in a street accident the day after he has received news of a Government appointment, and who, in addition to losing her only boy, is reduced

[1] From a rationalistic point of view, it is neither possible nor desirable to pretend to be able to explain all the facts of the Providential Order. "We ought to refrain from trying audaciously to explain everything by our own ideas, acting as if Christians had penetrated so deeply into the divine plan as to be omniscient. There is an infinite amount of suffering in the world that we cannot understand. Every theodicy has to leave a residuum unexplained and inexplicable. But we must hold to it that interpretations of life which come from the heart and are conceived in the light of the divine will, however defective they may be in individual cases, are nevertheless true in principle" (Wendland, *Miracles and Christianity*, pp. 180, 181).

to beggary in her old age, be easily persuaded of the justice of such a loss? Still worse—can those parents who have done their utmost to bring up their families in the fear of God, and who see one son after the other, in spite of all remonstrance and appeal, falling into evil habits which speedily end in a moral collapse and premature ruin, be readily shown the way in which such a tragedy fits in with the well-being of the world as a whole, or helps on the divine consummation of all things? The writer may here be pardoned a personal experience which made a deep impression upon him. Many years ago, a lady belonging to his congregation had a two-year-old child who was the darling of the family, and gave every promise of growing into a happy womanhood. One day her nurse, who was carrying the child, when in the act of putting her foot on a staircase leading to the basement, was disturbed by a sudden knock at the front door and, overbalancing herself, fell to the bottom of the stairs. She herself was practically uninjured, but the child was killed. In her agony the mother cried out, "Why did not God interfere, and cause but a moment's pause in the action of the visitor who knocked at the door—then my child would not have been taken from me?" Such tragic questions strike us dumb; there is humanly speaking no answer possible. They are all the more painful, since they are relevant only on a theistic view of the world. The atheist is untroubled by such doubts as rise from this kind of reflection—at least he cannot expect any answer to questions that have no meaning if the world is the issue of a blind cosmic energy with no pity or purpose in its heart—and no knowledge of the tragedy of suffering which it unconsciously causes. But the more thoroughly we hold to the personality,

freedom, and goodness of God, the more insistent do these questions become—and the harder is it to answer them on rational and logical lines.

It is just here, however, at the point of our sore need, that we find the final test and greatest opportunity of religious faith. Having rooted itself in sure grounds of positive experience, faith can face the cruel enigmas of life, if not with equanimity, at least with a high courage. If God has once been revealed to us as Holy Love, we are bound in loyalty as well as in logic to hold that, whether we can always see it or not, His hand is at the helm, and that all events however dark, and all sufferings however apparently unredeemed, must in some way work in with His beneficent ends. The fact that we cannot see how this can be in particular cases is irrelevant to this argument; the postulate of faith demands an unswerving and obstinate trust in the divine control and wise guidance of the world in matters beyond the reach of vision. Nor is it any answer to say that this is always difficult, and sometimes impracticable. Faith is no drawing-room virtue, but the hardest as it is the loftiest exercise of the soul's energy; and its prize is in direct proportion to its difficulty. There are hours of tense human experience, when it is at once the impossibility and the joy of the soul. It is the outgoing of our whole nature in complete acquiescence to God's will, and in complete confidence that that will is both wise and good. Its highest expression in the Old Testament is the noble utterance of Job, "Though He slay me, yet will I [trust [literally, wait in hope] in Him,"[1] and in the New, the Saviour's cry in Gethsemane when facing the horror of the cross, "Father, let this cup pass away from Me;

[1] Job xiii. 15.

nevertheless not My will, but Thine be done!" [1] When faith can rise from such depths of woe into such heights of victory over fear and doubt, and face the worst possible that life can contain with unshaken courage, the soul reaches the climax of all human nobleness, and to its highest victory over the "tyranny of the world."

And, unquestionably, *faith finds a reward in proportion to its difficulty*. Whether we are undergoing the stresses of personal suffering or calamity, or facing the riddle of cosmic suffering as a whole, our capacity to extract benefit out of our own experience, and to recover our sense of being spiritually at home in the world-order, is proportional to the wholeheartedness of our faith in God. Those who fail to attain to such an attitude cannot but miss the secret of inward peace; according as we are able to rise to it, we shall recover our moral poise and courage in facing the agonies of life; if we can fully reach such a faith as we have been describing, the riddle of the universe will yield up to us its full spiritual meaning. "And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." [2] Implicitly or explicitly it is faith, and faith alone, that enables humanity to meet the call of experience with undaunted mien, and to face the tragedies of suffering and sorrow in the spirit that extracts out of their acutest pangs that fine essence of patience and courage which is the crowning glory of human character.

VI

We return to the redemptive uses of suffering in a world of moral evil.

This is a world in which sin often causes suffering

[1] Luke xxii. 42. [2] 1 John v. 4.

and suffering often causes sin. How shall this confusion be resolved into a deeper harmony? By still further transforming the uses of suffering, and causing it to minister to the moral cleansing of the world. We have briefly touched on this in an earlier paragraph in this chapter and elsewhere; it is needful to develop the thought into fuller compass before we close. The principle of vicarious sacrifice is, as we have seen, woven into the very tissue of the organic world. How much more into the fabric of human experience! Whether a man be a prophet of a higher ideal, or the enunciator of a social or even a scientific truth, or a reconstructor of religious beliefs, he is generally called upon to pass through the fiery ordeal of suffering before his contribution to the welfare of the race is made a common possession. "Vicarious suffering is not an arbitrary contrivance by which Christ bought a formal pardon for a sinful world. It is a universal law, of which the Cross of Christ is the eternal symbol. It is the price which someone must pay for every step of progress and every conquest over evil the world shall ever gain." [1] It is easy for the cynic and the pessimist to find fault with this law of sacrifice, and to speak of the Great Egoist who dupes the best and noblest of His children into such heroisms of sacrifice for His own hidden ends.[2] The most precious contribution of the Christian Faith to the philosophy of suffering is the truth that God is not a Great Egoist, but the Universal Father, who shares in the upward sorrow and toil of His creatures, and who in His Son has Himself stooped beneath the yoke of sacrifice for their sakes, finding His own truest

[1] President Hyde, *Outlines of Social Theology*, p. 228. See also on this subject the *Ascent Through Christ*, pp. 290–6.

[2] Renan, *Dialogues Philosophiques*, p. 43.

self-realisation in this self-limitation on behalf of the wayward and sinful creatures of His love. Thus Christianity, in Carlyle's fine phrase, becomes the "Sanctuary of Sorrow," in that it transfigures suffering, and by the potent alchemy of sacrifice transmutes even sin and death into the service and ministry of the highest Life.

VII

Such being the highest uses of suffering in its possible effects on human character, a clear and helpful light is shed on many of the otherwise insoluble mysteries of life. It should dispose, among other difficulties, of the antithesis between the cosmic and ethical processes so sharply insisted upon by Professor Huxley in his Romanes Lecture. If pain can thus minister to holiness, and the roughest elements of experience be capable of so high a transmutation of values, the "moral indifference of Nature" is a phrase that can have no signification. This was the solution adopted of old by both Stoics and Epicureans, who taught that this disparity between Nature and man must be met by a proud self-containment, in which the tendrils of sensibility were cut at the root; or an opportunist Hedonism which said, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." It is the refutation also of the modern philosopher of Naturalism, whose creed is either a Stoicism touched with despair or an Epicureanism which under various disguises fails to justify the virtues it is still fain to foster. Christian ethics plumbs a lower depth of thought, and finds in its doctrine of the moral uses of pain and the redemptive function of sacrifice the higher unity in which the above antithesis is resolved. It tells us that we need not clothe ourselves in a complete armour of insensi-

bility against the hostile arrows of fortune; but rather—

> "Welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough."

Like the spear of Achilles, our God-sent sorrows can be made to heal the very wounds they cause, and minister to a truer health of soul. *The cosmic process, in other words, affects us as we choose to permit it*; its indifference only means that it depends upon us what use we make of it, and what effect it has upon us. "Christianity . . . knows no ultimate distinction between the course of the world and the course of the moral life, but sees 'all things working together for good' and discerns in each event of human history a manifestation of Divine Providence. The natural order is subsumed into the moral; and even where, to the Greek mind of old, and to the pagan mind ever and always, the former seemed to thwart and retard the latter, it is found most surely to promote and help it on. Misfortune and calamity, instead of being obstacles to the development of goodness, are the very soil of its best life—and also the atmosphere it needs to bring it to perfect ripeness. Not the wealthy, but the poor; not the prosperous, but the persecuted; not the high-minded, but the lowly, the weary, and the heavy-laden, are called blessed. A new office is found for suffering and calamity in the life of goodness; Man is made perfect through suffering." [1]

[1] James Seth, *A Study of Ethical Principles*, p. 416.

CHAPTER III

EVIL AS SIN. I. IN ITS ULTIMATE ASPECTS

"Oh, who shall sing of Life and not of Ill?
The essence of our will
Is fullest liberty to stray
From out the green and blessed way
Amid the desert wastes of drought and death."

LEWIS MORRIS, *The Ode of Life.*

IT is possible, as we have seen, to hold a theory of the conditional character of evil as suffering, and to point out a true and useful function which it fulfils in a universe of means and ends. When we turn, however, as we must now do, to the remaining problem —that of the existence of evil as moral wrong-doing, as *sin*—is a similar way of escape open to us? Can we at the same time postulate the existence of an All-wise and All-good Creator and Governor of the universe, in the face of the fact that into it sin has intruded, and that it has interwoven itself so inextricably with the very warp and woof of human life, and has further introduced an element of disorder and dislocation, if not of partial defeat, into the cosmic order? This is the problem we have now to face, as best we may, premising merely that it is the most difficult, complicated, and baffling of all the questions which face us as students of the Providential Order.

I

It will be necessary, therefore, to be as careful and precise as may be in our use of terms. What are we to understand by moral evil, or sin?

The idea of Good, as the opposite or contradiction of Evil, is like many other ultimate elements of experience (e.g. pleasure and pain), a value-judgment, and as such is strictly indefinable. The nearest approach to a "formal" definition is to say that the *good* in its moral connotation is that which *ought to be*, while *evil* may be described as that which *ought not to be*. Both terms apply only to that sphere of action which is comprised within the category of voluntary conduct and its results in experience. A mere fact (or act) considered in itself, and apart from its source in a moral (i.e. free) will, cannot be described as good or evil; but both the will that acts, and the results of its action, may be so described. Thus we may speak of a good man, or a bad man, according to the quality of his action, i.e. as it affects our moral sense of judgment; we may speak of a good God, or one who is not good, according to the kind of universe created by Him, or the disposition of the various elements of experience in that universe which are made possible through His sovereign will. So much for the general or formal idea of good and evil. When we turn from the *form* of the concept to its *content* (from the *that* to the *what* of good and evil), we pass to a more debatable and uncertain region, for while all men will agree, in virtue of their moral nature, as to the validity of the distinction between the two, they will apply this distinction in detail, as to what we are to conceive of as being good or evil, in innumerable ways. There is nothing more certain than that men, always and everywhere, recognise the difference in quality between a good action and a bad one—unless it be that you can scarcely find two men who will always agree precisely and in detail in what a good or a bad action consists. The *standards* of right and

wrong are constantly changing; the *sense* of right and wrong is an ineradicable attribute of human nature. The former depend on innumerable variable factors; without the latter it would be impossible to have a moral universe at all. The fact that there is no absolute standard of conduct for all moral beings, equally valid for all, presents no problem in a world whose basal principle is development and therefore relativity. In such a world it is inevitable that at each stage there should be, as between different individuals and communities, and as between one period and another, great differences of enlightenment, and inequalities of moral no less than physical capacity; inevitable is it also that the final end of conduct should be progressively revealed and realised. The real problem begins with the emergence of evil as a fact in a world created and sustained by a God of Holy Love and of Almighty Power. This is the most persistent, as it is the most urgent, religious problem in the history of thought. It is also the one that has called forth the most diverse answers. It is unnecessary for our purpose to enter into all the controversies which have marked the discussion of the problem, except in so far as they relate to the particular purpose of this book, i.e. in their bearings on the doctrine of Providence, and in the interests of a Christian theodicy.

Let us begin with an attempt at a more concrete definition. Speaking from the standpoint of Christian Theism, we mean by *good that moral attitude and conduct which are in accord with the nature of God and with His holy and loving purpose for the world of moral beings whom He has created for the attainment of a spiritual character realised in loving and obedient fellowship with Himself.* This ideal, according to the Christian faith, has been manifested in Jesus Christ,

who is at once the revelation of the holy and redeeming love of God, and the realisation of perfect Sonship in humanity. He embodied in Himself what humanity as a whole would become if all men were in the way of realising this end, not indeed at once, but, at each stage, without pause or retrogression; i.e. if the moral evolution of man had moved upward from the beginning, as physical evolution has moved upward.

II

Our problem, then, shapes itself thus—how in such a universe of moral and spiritual possibilities, created and overruled by a Being of absolute goodness and (presumably) limitless power, evil should have emerged at all? This, as it has been well put, is the ultimate crux of Theism.

1. We must begin by ruling out any notion that evil is in the universe by the direct will of such a God as was revealed in Jesus Christ. It could not possibly have originated in Himself. God's will must be that which is so "good" as to be incapable of even the shadow of wrong. His character is in a sense super-moral, in so far as the term "moral goodness" implies a struggle after an end as yet uncertain, whereas in God there is no divorce between Ideal and Fact, between the Best conceivable and the Best actual.[1] His is goodness already perfectly and permanently existent, while for His creatures it is at the best only progressively existent—a becoming; His is goodness beyond the reach of contingency—absolute goodness—while ours is always relative and open to possible reversal, through "defects of will" or "taint of blood." While agreeing with Lotze's dictum that "the circumstance that the truly good

[1] Ward, *Realm of Ends*, p. 317.

was not to be actualised without the possibility of the bad . . . we may consider as a necessity which need not be foreign even to God's own nature," [1] and affirm on the other hand that God's Absolute Goodness is to be distinguished from every other form of goodness by this *differentia*—that He cannot be conceived to be other than He actually and eternally is, without ceasing to be the God He is. There can thus be no absolute principle of evil in the universe. All evil must be relative. It is a contingent, not a necessary fact or state.

2. Nor can we fall back on the hypothesis of a principle of evil which is independent, co-ordinate, or co-eternal with the one creative Being who represents the principle of good in the universe. This dualistic explanation of evil has had a wide influence on human thought from early times. Both Zoroastrianism and Platonism were dualistic in their conception of reality. In the former we have the two gods Ahura Mazda and Ahriman, who were symbolised by light and darkness as representing the principles of good and evil, neither of whom could be completely regnant without destroying the other. In the latter, matter was envisaged as co-eternal with God—a system of blind necessity and the source of all evil, opposed to the principle of Reason or Idea of the Good who was the artificer (not the Creator) of the world, and found in matter a stubborn resistance to His energies and ends. Later on Gnosticism played a great part in the opposition to Christian ideas, and was only defeated at great cost. In the Hebrew tradition, which was carried over into Christian theology, we have a modified dualism in the theory of a personal devil, who introduced evil into the world by tempting

[1] *Philosophy and Religion* (Engl. Trans., p. 122).

mankind to disobey the divine will. The various systems of modern dualism and pluralism, which have recently had a wide vogue, posit the idea of a limited God who appears to be something less than the Creator, but more than human in His powers and functions, and with whom it is our duty to ally ourselves in the endeavour to spiritualise and ethicise the confused actual order into something like an orderly system of good. All these endeavours to solve the problem of evil by total or partial rejection of the Christian postulate of One Creative Source of all reality seem to us to surrender more than they gain in ethical clarity. We shall face the problem without recourse to any such efforts to win an easy solution to the problem by sacrificing the essential unity of the moral order.

The question thus returns on us with fresh insistence —how a holy God could have permitted the emergence of evil into His creation. Might not He have so constructed the world that it would evolve in a sinless manner, and be made to fulfil His purpose perfectly at each step of the long journey from its actual beginning to its ideal end? And if evil exists only by the sufferance of God, does this not make Him ultimately responsible for it, since He could have prevented it, or could have put an end to it whenever He willed to do so?

> "Wherefore should any evil hap to man—
> From ache of flesh to agony of soul—
> Since God's all-mercy mates all-potency?
> Nay, why permits He evil to Himself—
> Man's sin accounted such? Suppose a world
> Purged of all pain, with fit inhabitant—
> Man pure of evil thought or word or deed—
> Were it not well? Then wherefore otherwise?"[1]

[1] Browning.

From the ultimate or metaphysical point of view, it has always been felt that there is here a deep and, according to many noble thinkers, an insoluble enigma. Lotze, for instance, whose philosophy on the whole is so eminently Christian in its implications, frankly confesses that " all efforts to attain to clearness upon the above-mentioned subject can only try to apologise for the evil that does not admit of being done away by denial." [1] He disposes in turn of the pleas put forth from various directions—that evil is necessary, that it is a means of good, that bad is the prior fact, physical evil being the consequence of its being actual (i.e. that the Fall of Man involved the physical universe in its own disastrous consequences)—and affirms that none of the various ways in which mythology, mysticism, and dogmatics have attempted to " represent a primeval history of the world " which would account for sin " have been able to eliminate the inherent incongruities of the problem." His treatment of the question, however, suffers from the ambiguous way in which he uses the concept of evil, which with him often covers the three meanings of moral wrong-doing or sin, suffering, and limitation. As regards the last-named usage of the word " evil," he demurs to the idea that the fact is necessary on the ground that God has been bound in His creation to laws that have not permitted the unconditional Good, " but only the choice of the least worst among many, all of which were imperfect " because such laws are only the proper *modus agendi* of His own free spiritual activity; and that our empirical acquaintance with

[1] *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 122. The extreme condensation of the argument in this suggestive little volume makes Lotze's views somewhat difficult to grasp, but the summary and criticism here given (we trust) does it substantial justice.

things suggests alternative facts and arrangements which might have come to pass without entailing the alleged evils in their train. This is only another way of putting the "case against the universe" as we actually find it, which we have already dealt with in a previous chapter. Here we will only remind the reader that all attempts to suggest these other possible arrangements have ended in the ultimate confusion of the objectors and in the provisional justification of the actual order of Nature. On the other hand, Lotze's objection to the theory that the physical sufferings of the lower creation are only an entail following on the dislocation of the moral fall of man seems to us to be fully justified. We have already shown that such sufferings have clearly defined functions to fulfil in the organic order as such, and are amongst the normal conditions of evolution itself. It is only when we deal with the question of the entrance of moral evil itself into the world that we are thrown back on our uttermost resources of reason and faith. There is, however, we believe, something to be said in mitigation even of these difficulties.

III

Before further developing our constructive theory, it will prove helpful to glance rapidly on the various attempts made to grapple with this problem within historic times. There is no lack of material to hand, for, from the earliest period, it has obsessed the minds of the greatest thinkers.

1. We begin with the Gnostic, or Cosmological theory that moral evil finds its origin in the constitution of matter as opposed to spirit. This dualistic theory was brought (partly through Platonism) from

the East, and was widely held during the period when Christianity was beginning to take hold in the Roman Empire. It taught that there were two principles in the universe, the Ultimate Spirit behind all phenomenal existence which was the home of all that was pure and holy, and Matter as the seat of all forms of evil, moral as well as physical. Between these were numerous emanations mediating between the Absolute Spirit and created beings, the lowest of whom was the Demiurge or creator of the present world. "The stream of being in its ever-outward flow at length comes in contact with dead matter, which receives animation, and becomes a living source of evil." Amid many diversities of Gnostic schools of thought, with which we need not here concern ourselves, it seems to be a fixed point that the origin of all evil lies in this inert matter, which is hostile to the infusion of any higher life into its stubborn texture. This idea had an immense influence on Christian thought in early centuries, and affected the Christian attitude towards the physical world down to quite recent times, contributing greatly to the gloomy and ascetic view of life which prevailed so largely in the medieval church, and to the uncompromising attitude taken by quite recent types of evangelical piety to the "world" outside its fold. Probably St. Paul's stern attitude towards the "flesh" as the home of evil in human nature was partly derived from the influence of the inchoate Gnosticism of his day, or was at least coloured by it. The last refuge of this theory is the distrust shown by many religious thinkers of the animal "instincts" which are supposed in some mysterious way to be antagonistic to the higher life of the spirit.

It is time that we finally freed ourselves from a

false dualism of matter and spirit, even in this attenuated form. Theistic Monism has no room for such an illogical and mischievous separation between the twofold aspects of Reality. There is but one Creator, and all that He has made is good as coming from Himself. We may hold to the qualitative difference between matter and mind, and that—

> "Mind is not matter, nor from matter, but above,"

and yet believe that matter is no less necessary to spirit than spirit is to matter, and that they are equally divine in origin, nature, and uses, for—

> "God dwells in all,
> From life's minute beginnings, up at last
> To man—the consummation of this scheme
> Of being, the completion of this sphere of life."[1]

Certain it is that moral evil can have had no merely physical origin. However intricately interwoven matter is with spirit in our organic life on earth, and however in the indissoluble unity of personality it may be related to the activities and defects of moral beings, it is in itself a neutral factor in the ethical life—a mere means to the ends of conduct. We could not act morally apart from matter, for we could not live apart from it; but the moral element must come from that which alone is capable of moral aims, ideals, and action—the free, animating soul which uses the body for its good or evil purposes.

2. We pass to the Greek, or psychological theory that evil originates in the intellectual-volitional realm. According to Socrates, "all ethically wrong action proceeds from a wrong view—a view clouded by desires." The wise man only is free; the wicked is not free, and he is not free because of his ignorance.

[1] Browning, *The Ring and the Book*.

Enlightenment is therefore salvation.[1] Plato carries this theory to clearer issues by his doctrine of the freedom of the will. He holds that a man may sink into the condition of non-freedom by his own fault. This argument is carried further still by Aristotle, whose conception of personality comes almost within sight of the Christian view. In the hands of the Stoics, the issue again became clouded owing to their conception of fate and Providence, which made man in all his actions and internal constitution the puppet of the all-animating World-Power, so that personality ceased to be the true ground of his activities, which were, like everything else, but the predetermined and unavoidably necessary operations of the God-nature.[2] This idea appears earlier in the evolution of Greek thought under the guise of a Fate that determined even men's apparently voluntary actions, and shaped human destiny according to a dark and inscrutable law of retribution pursuing them from generation to generation in spite of all they could do to free themselves.[3] From another point of view the Stoics made evil a matter of relativity. "They showed how the perfection of the whole not only does not include the perfection of the individual parts, but even excludes it, and in this way substantiated their claim that God must necessarily allow the imperfection and even

[1] The element of truth in the Socratic view is thus expressed by Ward (*Realm of Ends*, p. 376): "We cannot of course (as Aristotle long ago pointed out) identify virtue and truth, vice and error: conduct is more than cognition, though, in proportion as it is intelligent, it always implies cognition. In impulsive action we act first and know after, but sooner or later experience brings wisdom: otherwise, in fact the plane of deliberative action would never have been attained."

[2] See Windelband's *History of Philosophy* (Engl. trans., p. 190 ff.).

[3] This idea is one of the chief *motifs* of the Greek tragedians, especially of Æschylus (vide his *Agamemnon*, etc.).

the baseness of man. In particular, they emphasised the point that it is only through opposition to evil that good, as such, is brought about; for, were there no folly and sin, there would be no virtue and wisdom. And while vice is thus deduced as the necessary foil to the good, the Stoics gave it, as a final consideration, that the Eternal Providence ultimately turns evil into good, and has in it but a refractory means for the attainment of its highest ends." [1] This makes ethics a department of logic, and evil vanishes in a cloud of dialectic ingenuities.

3. Another type of psychological theory is found in the Alexandrian (Philonic) school about the time of our Lord, who placed the active principle of evil in the opposition between *flesh* and *spirit*. This was really a variant of the Gnostic theory. The body is only a husk, a prison for the mind. Philo distinguishes between the *soul* (the vital principle) and the *pneuma*, which is the emanation of the spiritual deity imprisoned in the body, and retarded by the body's sensuous nature, so that man's universal sinfulness is rooted in this entanglement, and salvation consists in the extirpation of all sensuous desires; matter thus being again viewed as the seat of evil. Escape from the power of evil could only come through the true Gnosis, or Knowledge, which freed the spiritual principle in man from the tyranny of the fleshly nature.[2]

4. The Hebrew view of the nature and genesis of moral evil is distinguished from that of all other ancient attempts to account for it by the firmness with which it grasps essentially personal relationships as the real sphere of ethical action, and concentrates on the divine-human fellowship as the moral centre

[1] Windelband, op. cit., p. 197. [2] Obid., p. 197.

of life. It is thus in the historical line of thought which has been most fruitful of results both in thought and conduct. Its one great disadvantage is that ever since Rabbinical times it has been quite unnecessarily entangled in a literal interpretation of the Fall-myth as given in the second account of creation in Genesis. Through St. Paul this feature passed into orthodox Christian thought—a situation from which we are only now being painfully liberated through the influence of Evolutionary Anthropology. According to this ancient view, man was created perfect in the " image of God," and as such was placed in a position of sovereignty over nature, animate and inanimate. As to the *origin* of evil, it taught that this did not arise from spontaneous action on the part of man, but through the solicitation of an evil spirit (incarnate in the form of a serpent) ; as to its *nature*, that it was self-will, taking the form of sensuous disobedience of the revealed will of God ; and, as to its *perpetuation* from age to age, that the effect of the first sin was passed on through spiritual as well as physical heredity from generation to generation, so that the whole race " fell " in Adam. All men are thus born with a bias towards evil, and so are loaded with " guilt " and inability to regain their pristine innocence of nature and spiritual status before God. Theologically the Hebrew solution of the problem was so far the most radical and adequate attempt to solve the " mystery of iniquity " which had proved so baffling to the ancient world. It was based on personal relationships ; it posited—at least in its initial stage—that effective freedom of the will in man which alone gives moral quality to his actions. The Fall-story, religiously interpreted, gave a plausible account of the *origin* of evil in human life (though it

gave no help to explain its ultimate origin in the world of spirits, nor why an evil spirit was at hand to tempt man to the committal of his first sin) ; granted its premises (never called into serious question till modern times), it accounted for the *universality* of human sin ; and it gave some kind of explanation of the sense of *guilt* which has always haunted the moral consciousness of mankind. Finally, it formed the background of religious thought for the first thinkers of Christianity, and determined the form of their own theological construction in view of the revelation of the saving love of God in Jesus Christ ; passing through Paul and succeeding thinkers in the early Church into the theological system which took final shape in the teaching of Augustine, which in turn is the historical background of both Catholic and Protestant theology down to the most recent times.

The *background* ; but not by any means the undisputed *basis* of all Christian thought. Augustine accepted literally the Rabbinical doctrine of the Fall of Man and its momentous consequences for the race, and interpreted Paul's version of that doctrine, in its most uncompromising form : affirming not only the universal but total depravity of the human race ; its absolute inability to reclaim itself from the bondage and guilt of sin, apart from the " prevenient grace " of God ; the limitation of this Divine initiative to the case of the " elect," the rest of mankind being inevitably and eternally lost by the free (arbitrary ?) decree of God ; and the restriction of the seed of eternal life to those who had been actually baptized into the Church, within which alone was it possible for anyone to be saved. The fundamental dogma on which this forbidding scheme of salvation was built was the idea that through the Fall the very springs of spiritual

vitality in the race had been corrupted, and the freedom of the will hopelessly impaired till renewed by enabling grace, so that no man in his "natural" state was able to do right (the "virtues" of the heathen were only "splendid vices"), and all men deserved eternal damnation unless elected, through no merit or striving of their own, to be saved.

Against this uncompromising theological system rose Pelagius and his followers in equally uncompromising revolt. He taught that the original Fall had in no way impaired the freedom of the individual will, which in every man was at birth unbiased towards good or evil, so that he was quite free to choose either. In this extreme form, Pelagianism failed to account for the universal sinfulness of mankind, or for the equally universal sense of demerit which follows all men from the first dawn of moral consciousness to the grave; and another school of thought arose—the Semi-Pelagians—who opposed with equal emphasis the Augustinian denial of free will, and the Pelagian depreciation of grace. The key-note of this scheme of doctrine is co-operation between the will of man and the grace of God in the process of salvation. Absolute predestination was rejected, as tending to carelessness on the one side, or to despair on the other. Adam's sin was viewed as involving universal corruption, so that men were held to be prone by nature to evil, but not so radically as to destroy all the seeds of good, these being still dormant in the soul, the function of grace being to water them and bring them to full activity and fruition. In spite of all attempts to suppress this movement, it continued to spread, and it has never been really eliminated from the teachings of the Church. Probably most of us to-day are semi-Pelagian as regards the chief

points at issue—as were most of the earlier Fathers, both Eastern and Western. Modern Calvinism alone has fully accepted the Augustinian doctrine—in some cases it has gone far beyond it. Radical Calvinism, however, is almost a spent force, even among those who claim to represent the most " orthodox " views.

Medieval thinkers did little more than elaborate the materials provided for them during the creative period of Christian thought which came to its climax during Augustine's day. We need not therefore trouble ourselves here with the speculations and arguments of the Schoolmen on the problem of evil, since they have little to teach us that is new. It was not till the awakening of the European mind at the time of the Renaissance, and the quickening of a richer religious spirit at the Reformation, that a fresh wind blew through the world of thought, stirring men to renewed and more independent inquiry into the fundamental problems of life. Even so, it has taken more than three centuries to break the tyranny of tradition, to substitute the appeal to experience for the appeal to authority as the last court of judgment in religious thought ; in a word, to work from the concrete fact to the general law, instead of from the theological abstraction to the concrete instance. When this process is complete, theology, like every other science, will enter on a new lease of life and power.

IV

In passing from ancient to distinctively modern theories of the nature of moral evil, we note, in the first place, a change of emphasis from the theological to the philosophical ; and secondly, from the philosophical to the scientific. In both cases there has been

gain and loss. We have gained in breadth and concretiveness of view; we have lost in that the religious factors have been in danger of being subordinated on the one side to logical and metaphysical abstractions, and on the other to ethical and psychological subjectivities. It is only by insisting on the fact that sin is an infraction of the personal relationship between God and man, and not a mere disturbance of purely human relationships, still less a logical consequence of the nature of reality, that we shall correct these aberrations of thought, and keep the problem within its proper sphere of treatment. We must bring all theories to the test of this fundamental principle.

Modern theories of sin may be subsumed under the following categories: those that resolve it into *illusion*, metaphysical or religious; those that view it as a *necessity* (a stage towards goodness, or the result of overwhelming odds in the struggle after moral betterment); those that, eschewing metaphysical considerations, go on the basis of *empirical observation*; and those that deal with it as the *result of a real though conditioned freedom* of the will, and so link on to the earlier and more religious theories of the past.

1. *Sin as an illusion.* According to Spinoza, the father of modern Pantheism, sin is an illusion of human ignorance. "The knowledge of evil is an inadequate knowledge. If the human mind possessed only adequate ideas, it would be unable to conceive of evil." If our knowledge were as God's, and we could see things *sub specie æternitatis*, we should lose the vision of both good and evil. This position, if carried to its logical conclusion, would make all our moral experience illusory. It is impossible to rest in such a conclusion. We are impelled to believe in

the reality of our own experience, which provides both the basis and the material of thought. The experience of moral evil is one of the most stubborn facts of life, and to treat it as an illusion is to stultify the highest element in our being—our ethical sense, without which we should lose our way altogether. Unless God speaks to us in conscience in a real sense He does not speak to us at all ; unless we are at least relatively free, character is impossible ; unless choice between alternatives is an actual experience, the moral world, in which we feel nearest to ultimate reality, disappears altogether. Our very grasp of God as real depends in the last resort on the sense of the reality of our own personality ; and the very basis of personality is the fact that we know ourselves to be free, and that we are therefore responsible for our actions. This implies that the distinction between good and evil is real and valid.

Schleiermacher approaches Spinoza in making sin an illusion of the religious consciousness, due subjectively to the inadequacy of our God-consciousness, and objectively to the conflict of the flesh with the spirit. It finds its rise factually in the priority of man's sensual and intellectual development to his volitional development—a questionable psychological distinction, unless by *volitional* he meant *moral*, which seems doubtful. It was " ordained by God " that we should attribute *guilt* to this universal sense of deficiency, not because it was really sinful, but in order that there might be " occasion for redemption," which makes the sense of guilt an illusion of consciousness—a position all the more difficult to understand in that it makes God its author. According to this view, sin cannot be a reality to God. This is the logical consequence of the veiled Pantheism pervading

Schleiermacher's view of reality, as well as of the anthropocentric manner in which he investigates religion, making God an inference from the inherent sense of dependence on some great objective reality which pervades human nature as the nerve-centre of religious experience, and not an immediate experience of apprehension through His personal pressure on the soul. We cannot rest therefore in Schleiermacher's view of sin. At the same time, from the purely religious, as distinguished from the philosophical point of view, we owe Schleiermacher an unmeasured debt by his rich presentation of the psychological aspect of the problem, as well as by his exposition of the place of Jesus Christ in bringing us to its practical solution. As has been well said, " Jesus Christ according to Schleiermacher is the supreme Redeemer because He possessed the God-consciousness in a unique degree, and so is able to impart it to others. The influence of His personality has the effect of delivering men from the contradiction between the lower and the higher in their consciousness, and so reconciling them to the Highest. Salvation is an inward process, the source and ground of which is Jesus Christ." [1] All this, however, cannot blind us to the fact that this great pioneer of the most distinctive movement in modern theology started that movement on a background of pantheistic thought which has widely affected the treatment of the subject among his followers, and brought confusion into far wider circles of thought.

Ritschl, like Schleiermacher, begins with the Christian consciousness in his investigation of the nature of sin, but he parts from Schleiermacher in his rejection of any system of metaphysics, and makes a distinctive contribution to the subject in his doctrine of the

[1] Selbie, in *Hastings' Dictionary of Religion and Ethics*, ii, 239.

Kingdom of God as the final standard of judgment. He differs from Schleiermacher also in his description of Original Sin, which the latter understands as an inbred tendency derived from our surroundings and from the "accumulated sins" of the whole human race, while he follows the Pelagian tradition of the mere force of example in others. "The web of sinful action and reaction forms a kingdom of sin" which is the opposite of the Kingdom of God. Sin arises in the individual as "the result of the merely natural impulses of the human will," acting in ignorance of the real issues of conduct. But such sins are not so heinous as those acts of wrong-doing which arise from conscious infraction of a recognised law—the determined attitude of rejection of moral law in full view of its meaning and consequences. Ritschl appears to think that such deliberate sin, issuing in the final choice of evil as the soul's good, lies beyond the reach of pardon; but he saves the situation in the practical sense by saying that we can never know in any particular instance when such a state has been reached —most men, at least at first, sin through ignorance, and such sin is pardonable. This distinction between sins of ignorance and sin against light is a valuable one in many ways, but it is doubtful if the former can be reckoned as sin in the same sense as the latter. Objectively wrong actions can be done without any sense of their being sinful, and must be clearly differentiated from such deliberate actions as are accompanied by a real sense of guilt, a feeling which cannot properly be predicated of any other. However these two classes of action may merge into each other in actual experience, they stand poles apart in their ethical quality. For these and other reasons Ritschl's treatment of sin is full of difficulties,

in spite of the fact that he unquestionably carried the problem nearer to a true Christian solution.

2. *Sin as a necessity in human experience.* This view may be held either on metaphysical grounds, or from psychological considerations, as something resulting from the prior appearance of a lower nature in man before the development of the spiritual nature into sovereignty over the physical, so that wrongdoing is inevitable as a stage in actual experience.

(*a*) With Hegel, *sin is due to the progressive nature of man.* According to him, we cannot pass from the initial stage of innocence to that of goodness without undergoing a stage in which the contradictions of sin are experienced. " Thesis must pass through antithesis before true synthesis can be reached." Our very existence as selves, as individuals, is a part of the antithesis into which the primal Unity of Being broke up in the creation of the universe. Thus man is by nature " evil "—he is what ideally he ought not to be. Man, that is, is in a condition from which he ought to free himself. But this can only be achieved by actual experience of evil ; thus, sin is a necessity on the way to goodness. As soon as he realises himself as a self there follows division and separation. The fact that man discovers himself to be already in this condition as soon as self-consciousness emerges accounts for his initial sense of demerit, or " original sin." Or we may say that sin is a necessary experiment on the way to the realisation of goodness. But knowledge is also necessary to a sense of sin ; there must be knowledge of what is good before we can know ourselves as evil. And yet sin is in a sense due to ignorance. It is only as we discover the hopelessness of wrongdoing as a source of the highest satisfaction that we come to realise its moral futility. Here

Hegel again approximates to Spinoza's position. But Hegel is quite clear that, with increasing experience and knowledge, man must inevitably come to reject sin, and become virtuous.

In criticism of Hegel's position, we begin with a denial of the position that the only road to virtue is through sin. The true antithesis to innocence is not sin, but consciousness of and struggle against temptation; and there are two ways of encountering temptation. It may be met and mastered, or we may succumb to it. The actual way in which it has been met by the human race is the latter. But ideally it is not the only possible way. Otherwise it would not in the religious sense be sin at all. It is the feeling, when we sin, that we might have done otherwise that accounts for the sense of guilt in committing it. And we are all conscious at times of having successfully resisted temptation. Is this not a more radical way of arriving at virtue? The only objection to such an idea is the assumption sometimes made that by sinning we arrive at a deeper sense of the reality and guilt of sin than by successfully resisting it. But is this psychologically true? Who knows the full weight of temptation best—the man who gives way before he has felt the full brunt of the temptation in opposing and conquering it, or he who meets its complete onset and yet rises above it? Was not the experience of Jesus, as described in Heb. iv. 15—one who "was in all points tempted even as we are, yet without sin"—the experience of one who fulfilled the condition of a perfect moral character? And is not our experience, when we successfully resist sin "unto blood," a deeper experience than when we give way to its seductions? Conscience is enriched, the will strengthened, the whole moral nature brought to a

finer balance by every moral victory we win in the never-ending struggle against temptation; while the opposite is true of the man who gives way to actual sin after a futile and half-hearted resistance. Nor is it true that the experience of sin inevitably leads to repentance and a "fall upwards." The very opposite is often true.

There is a possibly still deeper objection to the Hegelian theory of moral evil. By making it a logical necessity in experience it de-ethicises the concept itself. What is intellectually necessary cannot be morally wrong. We do not blame a man for what he cannot help; responsibility ceases to be attributed to the victim of any defect of knowledge or of will which makes wrongdoing inevitable. The very fact that we blame ourselves or others for doing what is known to be wrong can only be justified on the assumption that we might have done otherwise.

Finally, a true theodicy is impossible on the basis of the Hegelian concept of sin. If it is in any real sense a necessity for us to sin on our way to virtue, then it is God who is to blame for creating such a universe, and not the creature He has made for following the only path possible for him. Such positions can only emanate from a Pantheistic view of Reality; they are entirely inconsistent with Theism in the Christian sense.

(*b*) From another point of view *certain psychologists of the evolutionary school affirm sin to be inevitable both in the race and the individual.* In the slow rise of the race from the animal to the human stage, there must have been a period when the awakening moral nature was too weak to claim its rights over the merely psychic, during which the lower nature would be in possession of the field, and could be ousted only after

long and bitter conflict; and the same is true of the individual. We shall deal with this question more at length in the sequel to this work; here a few preliminary considerations only need be dealt with. That the race has come by slow degrees into at least a nascent moral self-realisation, and that the same is true of the individual man, is unquestionably true; and it is equally true that the process has been and is one of continual effort and struggle. For, moral life is the gradual realisation of an ideal, and, *ex hypothesi*, an ideal is something which at any given moment lies ahead of actual attainment. But, in an evolving life, only that aspect of the ideal is morally incumbent as is capable (under the given conditions) of being realised at the time; it could therefore have been attained without actual sin, if all men had done all that was possible at each step of the way. It is the faith of Christians that in one supreme historic Individual the Ideal has been progressively realised without falling into sin at any stage, and that He did so not by any inner necessity of nature, but by the same means as are open to all—that is, by complete self-consecration to the will of the Living God whom He called Father, and who is the Father of all. There can, therefore, be no psychological necessity for actual sin in any man. If mankind has gone wrong as a race it is because the individuals composing it have each failed to do that which was morally possible at each stage of its upward march.

V

We turn to the light thrown on the mystery of evil by the revelation of God's nature and purpose for mankind in the Christian Faith, when expressed in terms of the modern evolutionary theory. We believe

that from this point of view a fresh start may be made, and that many of our chief difficulties tend to disappear.

In order to realise this, we must go back a step, and remind ourselves of what is the final end of creation—or at least its highest end as regards that part of creation which is open to our observation—to which we were led by our argument in a previous chapter. That end we found to be the development of the spiritual life—the perfecting of the soul. All the lower stages and processes of evolution are clearly subordinate to this—the emergence of a race of beings who could enter into conscious spiritual relations with God Himself. And as a necessary step to the attainment of this end, man as a spiritual being must be endowed with a real though relative independence and freedom of will. This implies that he is capable of making a free choice between alternatives of conduct. Some of these alternatives are neutral so far as moral distinctions are concerned (though these may at any moment take on an ethical aspect); others involve a choice between a certain course that commends itself to him as *right*, as distinguished from others that are recognised to be *wrong*. It is, therefore, right to say that God is responsible for the possibility of sin in the universe, though man, or whatever free-acting moral agent first inhabited it, was alone responsible for its actuality. And God ventured on this dread possibility because without it all truly moral and spiritual life would be out of the question. He might have created a world of *automata*, whose response to His operations upon them would be involuntary; but this could not satisfy God as Himself a free Creative Spirit seeking the fellowship of created free spirits; nor would it have permitted the attainment of the

highest possibilities of evolution. Having that purpose in view, He must launch forth into the enterprise of creative activity, and jeopardise the unbroken unity of the primal pre-ethical order by endowing a race of beings with "free" will. We thus arrive at a situation in which sin may at any moment pass out of the region of possibility into that of actuality.

The reality of ethical freedom must be conceded on any adequate theory of sin. Unless there be an element of independence or distinctiveness in the human will, in respect of its causal activity, we have no ground for imputing evil or wrongdoing to any man as such; and we make God altogether responsible for human action. The primal unity of the universe here breaks into a proximate pluralism—the One gives being to the Many; and the working forces of the world henceforth comprise the serene and changeless will of God on the one hand, co-operating with or being withstood by a multitude of secondary but free wills on the other hand. Apart from this fundamental element of freedom in man, we are shut up to a Pantheistic view of the cosmos; but Theism, while allowing the "indwelling" of God in the organised world, here comes to our rescue, by enabling us to fit in the fact of freedom into our scheme. This it does by opening up a vision of God as transcendent; which enables us to realise both our distinctiveness from Him as Free Spirit and our capacity for voluntary fellowship with Him.

> "God, whose pleasure brought
> Man into being, stands away
> As it were a hand's breadth off, to give
> Room for the newly-made to live,
> And look at Him from a place apart
> And use His gifts of brain and heart,"[1]

[1] Browning.

It is clear, then, that the *possibility* of evil enters into the universe as one of the consequences of that act of self-limitation whereby God created man, and other possible beings so far like man as to be free moral agents. Having projected His will into the Time-order in this particular way, it follows that so far God conditioned His own absolute freedom; for it means that He marked out a determinate path of activity for Himself, which precludes other modes of activity inconsistent with it. "There's not enough for this and that" even for a Creator, once a particular cosmos comes into being. The question, therefore, why God permits evil to exist in a world of relatively free moral agents thus becomes in one sense an irrelevant question. Once such agents exist, the divine activity is partly conditioned by theirs, and this in proportion to the reality and extent of their freedom. Actual moral evil can thus be banished from the universe only in one of two ways. One would be to destroy the evil wills that are given over to its influence by voluntary surrender, so returning to the *status quo ante*, with a view of making a fresh start. This method is illustrated in the Flood-myth of the Old Testament. Two considerations make it impossible to rest for long in such a circle of ideas. In the first place, it would amount to a confession of failure on the part of the Creator; and secondly, there would be no guarantee that the next experiment would fare any better.[1] Or, the situation might be met by some special effort to win back the souls who had come under the tyranny of evil by the exercise

[1] In the subsequent history of Noah it is clearly intimated that the suggested ancient experiment did not succeed. Sin speedily reappeared in the very man who had been spared with his family on account of his great virtue and faith, while the incurably wicked world was destroyed. Thus the evil entail overleaped

of any and every means of persuasion short of compulsion. The Providential purpose of God according to the revelation of the Christian Faith is in accordance with the latter alternative ; i.e. while an evolutionary, it is also actually a redemptive purpose, using all the ministries of love and grace to restore the race that has gone astray to its proper allegiance to the all-holy will of God.

the Flood ! Nor would there have been any certainty of a better result if *all* had perished, and an entirely new start been made by the creation of a fresh and sinless race. If the first Adam fell, might not a second have done the same ?

CHAPTER IV

EVIL AS SIN. 2. IN ITS EMPIRICAL ASPECTS

"How far are men kept in wickedness by being told that it is their natural state?"

W. E. CHANNING.

IN approaching the problem of sin in its actual manifestations, it will be convenient to describe the evolutionary process under fresh categories which throw light on the conditions leading to the emergence of man as a moral being, and of the "sin that doth so easily beset him."

I

There are two opposing tendencies in the physical universe.[1] In the first case there is the universal law of matter which goes under the name of the "degradation or dissipation of energy"—the Second Law of Thermodynamics—which means that, so far as the physical world is concerned, all energy tends to become less and less available by being dissipated into heat. This may be called the *katabolic* law of matter, and is as true of the organised material processes used for the purposes of life, such as digestion, motion, and muscular action, as of so-called dead or non-living matter.

Over against this downward tendency stands the

[1] In a part of what follows the writer is greatly indebted to Rev. S. A. McDowell, M.A., whose suggestive volume on *Evolution and Atonement* contains valuable material for theological restatement.

vital activity of living beings which is able to build up the food absorbed in digestion into the complex substances of which all organisms are composed, each organism being thus charged with energy at "high pressure" capable of being used for vital ends. This is the *anabolic* law of life—the capacity of living creatures to store up the energy which is constantly being dissipated. Individual organisms are endowed with this power only for a time. Ultimately the katabolic tendency reasserts its supremacy over the individual, and death supervenes; but not, generally speaking, till it has passed on the life-force to its descendants. In each generation the same process of anabolic up-building takes place, followed by waning vitality and final dissolution. The life-principle, however, once started on its course, has not only never failed to maintain itself against the dissipative tendency of matter, but has gathered strength as it goes in three directions—first, in the endowment of organisms with extraordinary fecundity; secondly, in the capacity to develop organisms of infinitely varied forms; thirdly, in producing along certain lines a process of evolution or development. There is thus in nature a vital push, or *élan vital*, to use Bergson's expression. This does not act equally in all directions, as already explained, but predominantly in one, which we may call the upward direction. In lateral directions life still retains the power of persistence, in the fecund repetition of organisms from generation to generation, in the power of differentiation, and also in the production of genera and species of almost infinite variety and complexity, but tending on the whole towards fixity of form. In one line only has this tendency moved qualitatively onward and upward, each step being necessitated by the

restless, exploring, creative quality of the life-principle, ever coming into fresh correspondences with its environment, and ever conquering the lower elements in the service of the higher. In this direction life is never satisfied with a state of equilibrium, but keeps on restlessly breaking new ground, evolving organisms endowed with finer organs and more vivid mentality for exploring and mastering their surroundings, till, in man, consciousness breaks into self-consciousness, and the capacity for ideals and other possibilities of personality are awakened.

Here freedom has come to its fullest earthly expression, and life is capable of becoming ethically autonomous, i.e. it is no longer necessitated or enslaved by the lower physical environment nor even by the organism it has created, but can use organism and environment alike for spiritual ends. For man has come in touch with the ultimate, all-embracing spiritual environment we call God, and by correspondence with Him can enter into free ethical relations with Him and with his fellow-men.

At this stage sin becomes possible. Instead of accepting his proper function of carrying on the evolutionary process into the ethico-spiritual life, man is capable of refusing that function. He may do this in two ways: either by declining to progress through spiritual struggle after a fuller life in harmony with the will of God, or by allowing the disintegrative influences of the lower life to debase and destroy his higher nature. The former is a state of arrested spiritual development, expressing itself in self-satisfaction, "conventional goodness," which means the paralysis of all high endeavour. This was the sin of the elder son in the parable.[1] The second is a state

[1] Luke xv. 25–32.

of active spiritual degeneracy, expressing itself in the pursuit of the satisfactions of the lower life of sense and passion, and in deliberate rejection of the call of the higher life. This was the sin of the prodigal.[1] Spiritual pride and sensuous self-indulgence—these are the two typical forms of sin. Both are in the end disintegrative of the higher nature, which is capable of continuous spiritual progress, because both imply a turning away from the unrealised ideals of life. Goodness is *spiritual anabolism*—a pressing on to the high calling of God; sin is *spiritual katabolism*—the wilful acceptance of things as they are, or an eager pursuit of things that ought not to be. In either case, the ultimate issue is the same—the loss of life's higher energies and the triumph of the forces of spiritual death ("the soul that sinneth, it shall die").

II

Working within these categories, we pass on to a fresh analysis of the psychological aspects of sin.

If, by an act of honest introspection, we examine our inner conscious life, we find much that corresponds with the two contrary tendencies just noted in the objective world. There is in us, on the one hand, a profound sense of unattained possibilities in the direction of a fuller and higher personality, and a unique feeling of obligation urging us to realise these possibilities in conduct and character. There is, on the other hand, an acute sense of being held back from the task of realising these possibilities by the backward and downward pull of what we call our lower impulses and instincts. The spiritual *élan vital* within us never suffers us to rest satisfied with our actual spiritual

[1] Luke xv. 12–24.

condition and attainments, but urges us on restlessly in aspiration and endeavour after a better life, while the inertia of our actual condition offers this tendency a more or less stubborn resistance. The result is that sense of inward discord between what is and what ought to be which marks the ethical consciousness of the "natural" man. He is in a strait betwixt two pathways: one the untrodden road of the ideal which calls him onwards and upwards, the other the well-beaten highway of the customary, the self-centred, the sensuous, which tempts him to remain as he is in satisfied correspondence with the lower ranges of his environment, in which he has so long been at home. Between these two alternative paths he stands, and in virtue of his unique gift of freedom he knows that he is called upon to choose between them.

Now, it is important to realise the fact that in themselves the "lower" or passional, and even the ego-centric instincts, are not evil in themselves. They are, it is true, an inheritance from man's brute ancestry; but just as true is it that they form the raw material of the ethical life; they are the psychological motive energies without which the ethical instinct could do and be nothing at all, for it would have to work *in vacuo*. The ancient and oft-repeated theory that the seat of evil lies in the "animal" propensities is thus untrue to fact. These propensities are ethically neutral, being an inherent endowment, essential for health and vigour, and for the maintenance of the human race. As Professor Tennant expresses it, "from the point of view of the biologist and the psychologist, they are thus natural and normal; they belong to man as God made him."[1] It is only when

[1] "Recent Reconstruction of the Conception of Sin" (in *Journal of Religion*, January 1925, pp. 43, 44).

the will consents passively to their dominance in disobedience to the call of the higher ideals which represent the normal line of future evolution that they become the "root of sin," though even then it is not the propensities themselves that become sinful, but the will which consents to their tyranny. "Hence the struggle between impulse and reason, or, more correctly speaking, the conflict of will as prompted to a lower and the will as prompted to a higher end, in which human morality has its being, and sin its birth." [1]

The same considerations enable us to realise the true meaning of the so-called *bias* to sin which theology has always found in unredeemed human nature, and of the "universality of sin" in the race. In the biological sphere, life always has to assert its forward or anabolic push against the inertia and lethargy of the actual situation, and the katabolic forces already entrenched in the organism must be overcome before any advance can be made. In the vast majority of organisms equilibrium is all that can be maintained as the result of this vital tension, and the species tends to reproduce itself indefinitely. It is only by the slow accumulation of minute differences among many organisms, or through the sudden appearance of a few specially anabolic individuals, that an advance to a new and higher species can be achieved, and there is always the possibility of a victory for the katabolic influences, in which case degeneracy leading finally to extinction is the fate of that species. The point we are making is that in the spiritual, no less than in the biological sphere, the higher life in each individual has to awaken in a *milieu* of animal propensities built

[1] "Recent Reconstruction of the Conception of Sin" (in *Journal of Religion*), January 1925, pp. 45, 46).

into a highly organised system, whose tendency is to resist all interference. Hence our hereditary or organic instincts always present difficulties and resistances to the awakening ethical process; thus, at the outset of our spiritual self-consciousness, it is easier to do wrong than right; it may be said indeed that there is a bias that way. So far the older theology was true to fact. But when the idea of hereditary guilt was associated with such a condition, and it was affirmed that we were born in a state of sin, and "under the wrath of God," a grave injustice was attributed to the Creator. To be born into the world under such conditions is no ground for blame, but a claim on divine sympathy and helpfulness. This indeed is the real message of the Christian Faith, so long misrepresented in this respect by many of its representative thinkers; what is vital to it is not the doctrine of "original sin," but the offer of "enabling" grace, which is but an old name for the reinforcing energies of the Gospel when welcomed and assimilated by the struggling and often despairing believer. In the seventh chapter of Romans we find the classical statement of this experience, both in the depth of its despair and in the joy of its emancipation.

It is from the same standpoint that we can best understand the doctrine of "universal sin." The extreme form of that doctrine, in which the human soul was represented as in a state of total depravity by nature, is a fiction of theologians, and therefore no essential part of Christian belief; but the general religious testimony of the race is concordant with the utterance of the Apostle: "we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God."[1] And, while far from assenting to the inevitability of sin—for that

[1] Rom. iii. 23.

would be to say that the only way to goodness was through wrongdoing—we can at least, under the conditions, recognise its likelihood in each particular case, and therefore its likelihood in all cases. The universality of sin—a fact clearly recognised by Jesus Himself [1]—is thus explained as a fact, though never to be justified as an act. Once more, to quote from Professor Tennant's article, "It is only when all the factors are given each its due emphasis that the emergence of sin in rational beings is accounted for. And inasmuch as the antecedents of sin are much the same in all moral subjects, the fact that all become sinful in varying degrees ceases to cause surprise." [2] It certainly does not call for the affirmation of a "sinful taint" derived from our first parent, as implied in the doctrine of original sin, in order to account for the fact.

III

We pass to a brief consideration of the actual conditions, individual and social, which give sin its opportunity of emergence in human life.

[1] That our Lord teaches the universality of sin, though not the total depravity of human nature, may be clearly shown from several incidental passages in His teaching. The Lord's Prayer implies the first of these positions in the words "forgive us our trespasses" (Matt. vi. 12); so does the phrase "if ye then, being evil . . ." (Matt. vii. 11), and the words about the Tower of Siloam, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke xiii. 3). The second point—that He believed men to be totally depraved—is negatived by His attitude towards all men, even those in the worst moral condition; by His attitude towards little children, whose innocence He clearly recognised (Matt. xviii. 3), towards fallen women (Luke vii. 47), towards Zaccheus (Luke xix. 1–9), towards the Young Ruler (Mark x. 21), etc. "Christ's estimate of men was generous. He measured them more by what they desired and sought than by their present attainment. He laid more stress on the point of progress which they had reached" (Stevens, *Theology of the New Testament*).

[2] Ibid., p. 51.

1. Properly speaking, *sin can only be predicated of individuals, and of society only as an aggregate or fellowship of individuals.* For in individuals alone is there a personal consciousness, and a personal will, and a personal sense of responsibility to be found. There is such a thing as social solidarity or pooling of personal relationships into a system of mutual influence, conscious and unconscious, and of common action; but, while in this way responsibility may be shared, it cannot be transferred. The communal will is not something different from the several individual wills comprising Society; it is but their amalgamation in common purposes and activities through the action of the social instinct. Moral conduct, it is true, can only function in a social environment; but it is always and only of individuals that we can predicate such conduct. The ancient word, "Though hand join with hand, the wicked shall not go unpunished,"[1] is profoundly and always true.

2. *When and how does individual responsibility begin?* It is scarcely true to affirm, with Professor Tennant, that "we are individual animal beings before we are moral,"[2] for the infant is from the beginning more than an animal, in that he is potentially an ethical being. But it is true that the ethical sense does not begin to function till the dawn of self-consciousness, which is not usually till late in the second or the early months of the third year. At that age we wake up to the existence of social laws and prohibitions and of the claims of these laws on our obedience. Nor does Professor Tennant appear to

[1] Prov. xi. 21 (cf. xxi. 5).

[2] Article on "Reconstruction of the Doctrine of Sin," *Journal of Religion*, March 1925, p. 159. It would be truer to say, with Sir Arthur Keith (*The Religion of a Darwinist*, p. 38), "Every child is born a savage; his task is to climb the ladder of civilisation."

the present writer to be right when, in this same article and in his earlier books on the same subject, he calls morality a "social creation." All that our social environment can do for us is to stimulate the moral sense into activity, and to furnish the conditions and opportunities for its proper functioning. How man first became potentially moral is a question that scientific psychology cannot answer, for all beginnings are wrapped in impenetrable mystery; we can only surmise that it is the fruit of that process of "epigenetic" evolution in which something is always appearing which is "more than the child of the past, and less than the parent of the future." But, once the fact appears, we can follow its course, and trace some of the agencies that stimulate its growth. In the case of the individual man, these agencies are social, if we include divine as well as human fellowship in that term. Similarly, in the case of the race, the moral sense of individual men was awakened and stimulated by the mutual interaction of other individuals in the family and the clan or tribe. The sense of wrongdoing came first through the transgression by the individual of the customs and laws of the group; and the sense of wrongdoing became a sense of sin when these customs and laws were believed to be laid down by divine authority. A time came when upon spiritually gifted individuals there rose a vision that, beyond custom and law as actually constituted, there were higher and better ideals, believed to be divinely inspired, waiting to be realised. The tension now shifted from that between individual inclination and social custom to that between custom and a higher sanction, and the first step in religious evolution was possible. Failure to respond would be sin in the individual and would lead to stagnation

or degeneracy in the community. The history of mankind is the record of the oscillations between moral progress and decay in the life of individuals and nations. Whether there has been real progress on the whole, or only in a central line of social evolution, is a problem not yet clearly determined. We shall return to this subject in the next volume, in which the ethical history of the race will be dealt with more at length.

IV

1. We will conclude this sketch of the psychological aspects of sin by emphasising two or three important points. First, we return to the fact *that the seat of sin is not in the lower propensities and passions*, which are but the material of sin, *but in the will*, when confronted with the alternatives of choice between lines of possible action which are differentiated in moral value. It implies a conscious recognition of this difference of value—i.e. there can be no committal of sin without knowing that it is a sin. What we do in honest ignorance cannot be sin, however destructive to human well-being it may be. And it implies that when the choice is presented, it must be free, i.e. that there is capacity to make the choice effective. There can be no sin in an act which we cannot help committing, for, in that case, free choice is out of the question, and responsibility ceases. True, there is such a thing as culpable ignorance: we may close our eyes and refuse to be enlightened; here the refusal itself is an act of sin, and we are responsible for its consequences in ourselves and others. It is to the former situation that St. Paul refers when he says that there were "times of ignorance at which

God winked "[1]; it is the latter which Jesus describes when he says, "If the light in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness"[2]; and, "now ye say we see, therefore your sin remaineth."[3] We are responsible not only for acting by the light we have, but by the light we might have had if we had been more willing to receive it, and to act upon it.

2. *The fact that mankind is more prone to sin than to goodness,* owing to the strength of the animal propensities and the weakness of the dawning will to goodness, which accounts for the universality of sin, *constitutes the greatest moral problem,* not only for the practical reformer, who feels that he is always up against stubborn difficulties, and often finds himself fighting single-handed against heavy odds, but also for the theologian, who is in a strait between two moral sentiments—the demand for unswerving loyalty to the eternal and absolute opposition between good and evil, and the call to refuse any condonation of evil as such, on the one hand; and, on the other, the demand for due recognition of the strength of temptation, and all the extenuating circumstances which must be borne in mind in all just evaluation of human conduct.

The Christian Faith alone provides an adequate solution of this otherwise unsolved problem. In the first place, it reveals the all-knowing God as Holy Love. As Holy, the interests of the moral world are absolutely safeguarded by His character and attitude towards good and evil; as Loving, the interests of all tempted and tried created persons in the universe are equally safeguarded, since He who has in Himself the ultimate standard of goodness is also the judge of our moral condition, and is able to weigh the actions

[1] Acts xvii. 30. [2] Matt. vi. 23. [3] John ix. 41.

of men and to make just allowance for human ignorance and frailty. The security provided by this twofold aspect of the divine nature for the moral order of the universe, and the reinforcement for faith which it offers in a world of baffling ethical confusion, due to the infinitely varying standards of conduct among men, the unequal pressure of temptation, and the impossibility in any particular case of knowing all the influences at work within the soul, are among the greatest services rendered by Christianity to religion. The all-knowledge of the Holy and Loving God is the final guarantee both of the absoluteness of the moral order of the universe and of the certainty that justice will be meted out in the last judgment to all men in the infinite variety of their condition.

3. Again, the foregoing considerations enable us to *distinguish satisfactorily between imperfection and sin.* Sin is wilful transgression of a more or less fully realised moral law; imperfection is simply failure in an ethically evolving world of persons to attain at any given moment the ideal life which is the final end of the process. Sin is thus avoidable, for it is failure to attain the immediately possible; but imperfection, as failure to attain what is only possible at the far end of all moral endeavour, is sinful only if persisted in when a better alternative is within reach. All sin is thus imperfection; but not all imperfection is sin. "Not failure, but low aim is crime." In the case of such creatures as we are, there must always be an unattained factor in our personality, and it is the recognition of this in the experience of good men that is the fountain-head and measure of their humility. What gives humility its moral grandeur is the fact that it implies a sense of contrast between what we are and the ideal after which we are striving. Is not this the true

explanation of our Lord's repudiation of the term "good"? Even He was not "made perfect" in an instant; for Him, as for all men, perfection was not a datum, but an achievement; His experience included real struggle with real temptation at every stage of His earthly career, and, while at any given moment He was in unbroken fellowship with the Father, and did that Father's will perfectly under the given conditions, the final victory was not gained till the hour when He had completed the "work given Him to do," and whispered with His dying breath, "It is finished . . . into Thy hands I commit My spirit." It was characteristic of His intense moral sensitiveness that till that last hour He shrank from such an epithet with the vision of further struggle after His ideal still before Him. He shared the sense of incompleteness with all good men, and was "meek and lowly of heart," though He had no share in their consciousness of sin.

4. Finally, it may be asked, does not this evolutionary treatment of sin imperil our sense of its exceeding sinfulness? That, indeed, would be to prove that our account of it was sadly lacking. On the other hand, we hold that it enables us to realise, with fresh vividness, both the subjective and objective reality of moral evil.

Subjectively, it involves the consciousness that sin, if persisted in, involves the final defeat of God's purpose for humanity. That purpose, as we have repeatedly emphasised, is the attainment of a full personality, i.e. one whose utmost possibilities are realised in loving fellowship with the all-holy and all-loving God. Any act or habit or inner feeling which at any given moment is out of harmony with the known will of God is sinful, and is always felt to be

sinful; and any wilful failure to strive after that will in all sincerity is doubly sinful, for it is conscious preference for a lower standard of conduct when a higher is possible. We do not hold, with Schleiermacher and others, that sin is the mere "consciousness of sin"; rather would we emphasise the fact that the consciousness of sin, if acquiesced in, is itself a sinful element. One of the most mischievous effects of moral evil is to become accustomed without inward revolt to the thought that we have done wrong, and are in an evil way of life. In this state the very faculty whereby we recognise the difference between right and wrong tends to wilt and die within us; once having acquiesced in our condition without protest, we sink into a state of moral confusion and defeat from which recovery is wellnigh impossible. "Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure, but even their mind and their conscience are defiled." [1]

Objectively, we recognise that moral evil is the stultification of the very process of moral and spiritual evolution. To fail in the purpose of our creation is to throw the divine plan into confusion, to bring maladjustment into the relation between the soul and the whole of its environment, and to inhibit the life-movement in the last and noblest stage of its long history. We have but to glance at the chequered history of humanity as a whole, and especially of particular nations and individuals, to realise what perversions of instinct and defeats of will, what unspeakable cruelties and miseries in the long story of "man's inhumanity to man," have been caused by the refusal of men to "follow the gleam" of their proper destiny; and how men and races have risen

[1] Titus i. 15.

to great heights only to fall into utter failure and ruin because they refused to "rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to better things." In proportion to the greatness of man's nature and the height of his possibilities is the ruin into which he has fallen through sin.

A glance at the condition of the world at the present time is enough to drive home the same conviction of the disastrous effects of sin, whether we look at it as a series of overt acts or a condition of moral abnormality and unrest. Humanity is now presumably at the highest point of its evolution from a cultural and civilised point of view. There has been an unparalleled development of human control over the natural environment; the opportunity of increasing wealth at a fabulous rate has been enjoyed as never before; the peoples of the world have come into universal contact; international relationships have become intimate through the facilities of travel; the Western nations generally are in possession of great stores of knowledge and power; in a word, the time has come when a universal and mutually beneficent civilisation has for the first time become possible. Instead of a general acceptance of this opportunity of constructing the fabric of such a civilisation by common consent, in which all men would take their appropriate place, and all would join in a system of universal service and progress, what do we see? If we take the mutual attitude of even the most civilised nations, we find that, after the most terrible cataclysm of history, they are filled with the profoundest suspicions of each other's purposes and policies; that there are more armed men in Europe to-day than before the late war; that most of the nations who took part in the conflict are unable to pay the debts incurred in it

because they are spending more than their annual taxes in nervous preparations for another possible war in the future—a war that would outdo in its horrors the unspeakable tragedies of the one so recently concluded. If we take the internal condition of any one of these nations, we find that it is divided by deep chasms of class hatred and jealousy; that the wealth produced by the united efforts of the brains and muscles of the people is unfairly divided; that there is needless luxury at one end of the social scale, and widespread want at the other; and that discontent is universal. If we examine the moral psychology of individuals we find that in few cases is human nature normal, with the lower propensities in happy subjection to the spiritual; and that the vast majority of men and women live a divided and more or less unhappy inner life in which "I dare not waits upon I would" in face of temptations to open wrongdoing, while "the good that I would I do not" sends up its cry as the unscaled heights of purity and love lift their inviting ideals before the soul's vision. If we upon whom the ends of the ages have come, with all the resources of religion at our disposal by way of remedy, are in such a plight; if, after untold generations of discipline and opportunity for betterment, we are still spiritually unemancipated, is it possible to exaggerate the devastating power of that evil thing we call sin, and the need of some higher energy to set man free for the triumphant and unhindered pursuit of those ideals for which he was created?

How, then, shall man be saved from himself? That is the crucial question which remains for solution in our survey of the Providential Order from the divine side of the problem.

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CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL AS SIN. 3. THE WAY OF REDEMPTION

"Our faith is not that one day we shall solve all the riddles of Providence, and see all things put under us, *but now we see Jesus*; and that we commit ourselves to One who has both the solution of every tragic thing and the glory of every dark thing clear and sure in a Kingdom that cannot be moved, and, therefore, moves for ever on."

FORSYTH, *The Cruciality of the Cross.*

PROVIDENCE from the divine side—how shall a race of spiritual beings, with ethical freedom as their highest attribute, the attainment of personality as their ideal end, and universal failure to carry on the process of evolution to its possibilities as their actual condition, be restored to the true pathway of their development?

I

We begin with the reaffirmation of a fact already referred to, and to which history and individual experience bear eloquent testimony—the destructive power of sin on the human soul.

Biologists—as we have seen—tell us that, once an organism loses its way in the hierarchy of being and becomes fixed or degenerate in form, it can never return on its tracks and rejoin the central stream of evolving creatures. It is condemned either to "fixity" of type, repeating itself endlessly in practically the same form, or, descending slowly into a parasitic

habit of life as its vitality becomes exhausted, finally to disappear altogether from the drama of life. As Sir Arthur Keith says, "Nature has written *finis* to many of her diaries; her geological shelves are crowded with completed volumes." [1] So far as is known, there is no human type of which this is true organically, but there is something parallel to it in the process of degeneracy exemplified in the long list of vanished peoples which were once vigorous and great, but which have long since passed from the scene of history; and in the age-long cry of despair which rises from the hearts of countless individual souls which have lost and failed to regain their heritage. Esau was not the only person who, having forfeited that birthright, "found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." [2] When once the moral katabolic process gets the better of the anabolic will to betterment, there is no subjective source of recuperative energy left by which that process can be reversed; in other words, struggle as we may, we have no power to rise when once we fall into mortal sin, for the poison has infected the very sources of the will-power through which alone renewal could be attained. Partial recoveries and reforms in social and individual morality have doubtless often been attained which have no ostensibly spiritual origin, but there must be a reinforcement of the "resident" or subjective spiritual forces at the heart of humanity before it can fully regain the forsaken pathway of the higher life; and that can only come from the creative source of all life. *Only a religion of redemption can save such a world as ours.* And, of all the so-called religions of redemption, Christianity alone meets the full demands

[1] *The Religion of a Darwinist*, by Sir Arthur Keith, p. 40.
[2] Heb. xii. 17.

of the situation, that being the restoration of the full possibilities of personality for all men who are willing to be saved.

II

There are only two ways in which God could redeem the errant race of mankind.

The first is, that he should work through the general spiritual environment with which man is in touch, i.e. through His normal and general providential methods. That this has been so from the beginning of humanity is one of the postulates of this book. Man is man in virtue of having come into conscious correspondence with the divine environment; that is what makes him a religious being. History is, from the highest point of view, the story of the pressure of the total environment, especially the spiritual factors in that environment, on man's nature, and of his reaction to that environment. It is slowly being brought home to historians—a fact they have been strangely slow to recognise—that religion has everywhere been the most potent factor in the chequered life of mankind. There is no aspect of experience which has graven itself so deeply in human institutions, which has created such a wealth of architectural, artistic, musical, and cultural products, which has expressed itself in so many ways, and with such varied and passionate insistence, in the complex and troubled story of the race. Religion is the parent of all the philosophies, the arts, the sciences, the political and social institutions of all peoples. The noblest and most enduring buildings raised by man are his temples and shrines; the highest triumphs of his art, in statuary, in song, in poetry, in painting, in literature, are religious in origin and in inspiration. The central

experiences of life have always been associated with religious ritual and worship; conception, birth, adolescence, marriage, death—all have had their tutelary deities, their ceremonial rites, their appropriate forms of worship. Social institutions have always and everywhere craved religious sanctions. In all high moments of common experience, whether of joy or sorrow, peril or escape, social rejoicing or humiliation, men have instinctively turned to some form of religious expression by way of relief, whether in thanksgiving, aspiration, confession, or communion. True, these children of a fertile parent have everywhere striven to free themselves from family control, and to assert their autonomy and independence. One by one they have broken away from the restraints of the mother-source that has produced them—art, science, philosophy, political institutions, etc.—and in the modern world they have even tried to deny their pedigree. In so doing they have gained in freedom what they have lost in authority, and in validity of appeal. But, even so, as Professor Harding has expressed it, "in attaining their majority, the children have not foregone the quality of their parent; they are still of her stock and substance." [1]

When, however, we examine more closely the nature of man's response to the appeal of this potent spiritual environment, we find that the religious sense—as so far developed—has not been adequate for the t ask. Man by "searching has not found out God." On the other hand, he has created God in his own image, and has attributed to Him, not the highest and purest qualities of his own nature, but often the lowest and the most bestial. Historically there has been no redemption along that line. Though God has "never

[1] *The Meaning of God in Human Life*, by A. C. Harding, p. 14.

left Himself without witness," [1] in that " the invisible things of Him from the foundation of the world are clearly seen, even His eternal power and godhead," the world generally has " changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for evermore." [2] Paul's language, in this brief sketch of his philosophy of religion on its historical side, is severe and perhaps extreme; nevertheless, it expresses the substantial truth of the case.

III

The only other method of revealing His nature and His redemptive purpose for humanity was for God Himself to " enter into the stream of human history as focused in one of its centres," and reveal Himself concretely in a human life, there to manifest His nature, and to unfold the process of redemption in a supreme and saving act. This is what, according to the Christian Faith, He has done through Jesus Christ and His Cross.

In Christianity the immanental presence of God in the universe has been supplemented by what has been truly called a " divine intrusion " from the transcendental sphere into the stream of historical events. " The Word was made flesh and dwelt " (" tabernacled for a time ") " among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." [3] In a sense the coming of Jesus was the consummation of an historical process dating back into far centuries. There had been a Shadow-Christ in the prophetic message of which the human Christ was the realisation.[4] " God, who at

[1] Acts xiv. 17. [2] Rom. i. 20, 25. [3] John i. 14.
[4] See Luke xxiv. 27.

sundry times and in divers manners spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these latter days spoken unto us in His [a] son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom He made the worlds." [1] In him the true nature of God was incarnated under the limitations of humanity; in Him the true nature of man was revealed in a pure and sinless personality; and in Him our broken and sundered humanity, drifting aimlessly on the waves of circumstance, urged hither and thither in diverse directions by wayward impulses or fierce passions, was made one "through His blood." "For He is our peace, who hath made of both" (i.e. Gentile and Jew) "one, and hath broken down the wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity . . . for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace, that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the Cross, having slain the enmity thereby, and came to preach peace to them which were afar off and to them that were nigh." [2] If now we ask, "What is God like?" we are able to answer, "He is such a one as Jesus has unfolded Him to be—the Holy Father of mankind, who loves His children with an eternal love." If we ask "What is man meant to be?" we can answer, "Such a one as Jesus was—the realised ideal of our nature and possibilities." And if we ask, "How shall we slough off our sinfulness, and return into the ideal pathway from which we have wandered, there to regain the fullness of our personality?" we must answer, "By entering into the new relation with God whereby we cry, Abba, Father, which has been made possible by the atoning sacrifice of His dear Son on the Cross, whereby our sin was condemned in our humanity—condemned both in its nature and its

[1] Heb. i. 1, 2. [2] Eph. ii. 14–17.

tragic consequences in His death—and forgiveness was made possible for that sin; and by receiving into our hearts His helpful grace whereby through His spirit He will give us power to become one with God and to rise into newness of life." This, in brief, is the mystery "hidden from the foundation of the world" but now revealed in the Gospel. This is historical Christianity, the religion which meets man in his profoundest need, and is capable of raising him to his highest possibilities, thus fulfilling the providential purpose of God.

IV

How shall we relate this process of redemption to the general evolutionary process of the world?

It cannot be subsumed under the categories of physical or organic evolution, for it is a new departure, being a transaction in the realm of personality—a fact that transcends all biological processes, as these transcend all physical and chemical processes. It does not, however, break away discontinuously from these lower realms of being. There is continuity from the far-off beginning of the evolutionary movement to its far-off end, for all the lower processes are conserved and subsumed in the higher; but the higher cannot be explained by the lower; rather the lower are explained by their relation to the higher and the highest. The redemptive movement in history is the last manifestation of the divine activity in its transcendent-immanent movement of creation and history. As the physical world is the appropriate environment of man's physical being, so the personal God is the appropriate environment of man's spiritual nature. Through sin man's relation to his total environment

had become abnormal; and from the highest environment comes this adaptation to man's failure and need, that his relation to it might once more become normal and life-renewing. What man could not do by any self-renewal has been made possible by this supreme act of God in history. The way is now open for the complete resumption of the upward path. Henceforth man, in spite of sin, can, if he will, fulfil the purpose of God in the world-process; individually by regaining his ideal sonship; generally by the realisation of the ideal society in a Kingdom of God, i.e. a society of redeemed persons in full fellowship with one another and with God. The realisation of this ideal state is the divine-human problem of the future.

V

One other vital problem of the Providential movement is now in a position to receive a more or less adequate answer—*How is the divine sovereignty to be safeguarded in a world where man's freedom is real and sin a universal fact?*

If that sovereignty is also real, the divine will must in some real meaning of the words ultimately prevail. Calvinism safeguarded this position by making the divine will supremely operative in every detail of the process as well as in the far-off end. This it did at the cost of practically denying the reality of human freedom, and of making God the author of evil as well as good. Our modern conception of human personality, which in Calvin's day was very imperfectly realised, makes this solution, at least in Calvin's sense, impossible. Personality implies, as its highest attribute, ethical responsibility, and responsibility can only exist in a world of free personalities. But if freedom

is real, it involves the possibility of refusal to obey the divine will, and that possibility at any given moment, and therefore throughout the whole process, may end in stultifying the divine purpose so far as man is concerned. How shall this antinomy be resolved without on the one hand substantially making human freedom an illusion, or on the other without bringing possible failure into the Providential Order?

In the first place, we must revise our notion of God's sovereignty. When this term was first used, the only meaning that could be given to it was that of absolute and unconditional sovereignty. In quite modern times the idea of constitutional sovereignty has taken the place of the older conception of irresponsible rulership—a change directly due to a better conception of personality both in ruler and ruled, involving responsibilities on the side of sovereign as well as subject. In such a system, the ruler is ideally the embodied representative of the laws of social righteousness, and as such has a right to loyal obedience from each and every one of his subjects; but this right cannot be legitimately exercised unless at the same time the proper liberty of the subject is respected. In a mixed community composed on the one side of law-abiding subjects, and of evil-doers on the other, the social order is vindicated by a system of rewards and punishments, the rewards being the privileges consequent on free obedience, the punishments being the withholding of these privileges, and the infliction of positive penalties for lawless disobedience.

If we carry this analogy into the moral order of the universe, and identify God's will with the beneficent aim of that order, we find the vindication of the order to be equally sure whether men obey or disobey His laws. In other words, God is vindicated in the judicial

consequences of evil-doing as well as in the rewards of well-doing.

But, secondly, God's moral order, as finally revealed in the Gospel, is different from all human governments in that it is a kingdom of grace as well as of law. Provision is made not only for the ultimate punishment of wrongdoing, but for the restoration of the sinner, if he is willing, to full life and favour. Even if all men refused this opportunity, God and His moral order are still vindicated in what is made possible through His grace; if all accept it, then is the purpose of God's grace as well as law completely fulfilled. In such an order there is hope and welcome for all to come in without interfering with the full rights of personality in God or man. Whether all will be saved now depends, not on God, but on man. This is surely what the Apostle means in saying, "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." [1]

VI

In bringing this discussion of the problems of Providence to an end, we feel, however, that our task is only half completed. For, as was stated at the outset, the problems of divine Providence, while capable of isolation in thought, are in practice complicated by the fact that the actual world-order is a resultant of two factors—the divine and the human—and that the human is not working harmoniously with the divine. If man, from the beginning of his conscious life, had had the insight to realise, and the courage and fidelity to follow, the ideal end of his creation, accepting the seemingly hard conditions of his lot on

[1] 1 John i. 9.

the one side, and, on the other, progressively fulfilling his cosmic function as a free co-worker with God, in complete unison with His will and in loving fellowship with His spirit—the course of history would have been a drama now rapidly approaching its intended climax, and an ideal society of souls would already be realised on earth. Why this end is still buried as a glorious but uncertain possibility in the future is partly due to causes beyond man's control; but it is chiefly due to his refusal to follow the pathway of his ideal destiny as gradually unfolded to him. Even the revelation of God in Christ, and of His holy redeeming purpose for the race, has so far failed to win it into the right path. It has, it is true, succeeded in rousing a whole-hearted response in countless individual men and women, and in establishing a fellowship of souls in the Church (and sporadically outside it) who have more or less adequately endeavoured to live the life and spread the light; but this movement has been too meagre in volume and too partial in range to affect the life of humanity as a whole. The world is still an unredeemed world; still only half spiritualised; still divided in mind and purpose; still torn between the forces of the actual and the call of the ideal; still held back from harmonious pursuit of the things that make for stability and spiritual progress.

In another volume we propose to face the problems of Human Providence, beginning with the equipment of man for his providential function, his relation with the physical, human, and divine environment in which his life has been set; his emergence from a prehuman ancestry to full possession of his human faculties; the long prehistoric night in which he slowly grew

into some kind of control of his physical habitat ; the dawn of history in which we see the tentative beginnings of ordered society ; the long series of racial and national struggles in which a restless succession of civilisations rose, culminated, clashed, and fell into ruin ; the confused and troubled story of religion in its various forms, culminating in the revelation leading to the coming of Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Christian Church ; the rise of modern civilisation in the Western world and its recent rapid dominance over the surviving civilisation of the Far East and the Near West ; the sudden quickening of control over natural forces in quite modern times which has annihilated distance and brought the whole human race for the first time in history into social relations, out of which a world-order must somehow be developed if humanity is to avoid final confusion and catastrophe. In all this man has in the purpose of God been prepared and educated for his providential function of co-partnership with Himself in the building up of an ideal world of personalities full of boundless possibilities. We shall close with a survey of man's present position, perils, and opportunities and of the conditions to be fulfilled if humanity is to realise the divine purpose. Here we find the synthesis of the divine and human factors in the Providential realm.

* * * * *

The ancient poet sang the epic of " Arms and the Man "—recounting the deeds of the warlike heroes of ancient times ; our modern sage (Carlyle) has sung the epic of " Tools and the Man "—the story of man's conquest over Nature. It is time someone sang the epic of " God and the Man " as the joint heroes of the world of the future, if it is not to sink into degeneracy and destruction, either by slow decay or in lurid

revolution and possibly race-suicide. Have not the first strains of that mighty epic been sounded?

"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away. . . . And I John saw the Holy City, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. . . . And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. . . . And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to lighten it, for the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it. . . . And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. . . . Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

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